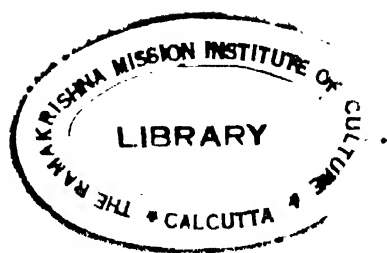




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# The Vedanta Kesari

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar,

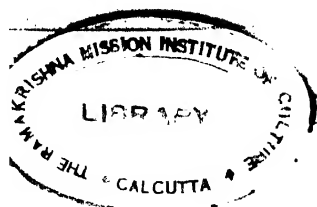
"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want. And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads, and believe that 'I am the Atman.'—*Swami Vivekananda.*

November, 1923.

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

*By Swami Saradananda.*

Just after his arrival into the Kali Temple of Dakshineswar, Tota Puri first came to the big terrace standing at the head of the bathing ghat. At that time, the Master was sitting there in a corner, all absorbed in his own thoughts. There was nothing striking in his dress, wearing but the common Hindu apparel of a dhoti as he was, to attract the notice of any stranger, but the beauty of his holiness and the lustre of spirituality shining on his face could not fail to draw the wondering attention of Tota. At a glance he understood that he was not an ordinary man, and rare indeed were such *adhikaris* for the Vedanta sadhana. As a bee is instinctively attracted to a beautiful flower by its fragrance, so Tota moved on to the corner where Sri Ramakrishna was sitting. He saw him closely, almost with the scrutinising eye of an examiner and his mind was filled with joy and wonderment to perceive in him, the perfection of all requisite qualities that are expected in a sadhaka of the Vedanta path, as they could be indicated by external appearances. Tota was a connoisseur and he did not fail to recognise his gem. Of himself, he asked Sri Ramakrishna if he felt any willing to perform the Vedanta





sadhana under him, as he appeared to be the fittest person for the same. The tall nude figure of Tota, with long, flowing matted locks, thus confronting him and putting this strange question, no doubt produced some surprise in the Master's mind, but he replied like a child,—“Well I do not know what I should do and what I should not. My Mother knows everything. If She commands me to do it, then only I can do.”

Tota said—“Then go and ask your mother about it for I can't stay here long.”

Without giving any further reply, the Master got up and went into the shrine of the Divine Mother, and there while in Bhava samadhi, he heard, the distinct command of the Divine Mother, to undergo the Vedanta sadhana under the guidance of Tota Puri, as his coming to Dakshinewar was ordained for that Mission.

The Master came out of the Temple almost in transport and spoke of the Divine command of his Mother to Tota. It was then that Tota Puri came to understand that by Mother, Sri Ramakrishna meant, the Goddess of the Temple and not any earthly mother. The unreserved simplicity and the absolute resignation through all exclusive love of a child were quite patent in his reference of his Mother, Tota noticed it and was much moved by it no doubt; but his long habit of looking up to divinity as the Absolute Substance bereft of all attributes, both personal and impersonal, stood in his way in properly appreciating the spirit of the Master. Tota Puri belonged to that extreme wing of the Vedantic school which holds that the Absolute Reality of life and existence is the attributeless Brahman which is but a negation of all relative existence and the *Summum Bonum* of life consists in the realisation of this Absolute Brahman as the supreme Verity of one's *Own Soul*, and as such, there is no necessity of prayer or of worship or devotion for the same, rigorous self-analysis and self-determination which is commonly known as the path of *Vichara* among the Vedantins is enough for the purpose. Hence this school looks down upon the path of devotion and worship of God as great superstition. All worship and devotion necessarily involves the conception of a personal God, which this school considers as much a non-reality, as the display of 'name and form' of this phenomenal universe. So it was natural that Tota would



take the words of the Master with a spirit of slight, thinking him to be still in ignorance and superstition. Further Tota Puri had a great prejudice against the worship of Kali, the Divine Power of Brahman, for he thought Her to be a mere myth and denied Her all separate individual existence. Nor he felt any need for the propitiation or worship of that Power. He maintained that inasmuch as the bondage and sufferings of man is due to his own ignorance about that Absolute Reality of his own soul, his salvation lies in removing that ignorance of his by realisation of the same reality, which can be done again by his own self-effort, and so there is absolutely no need of resorting to the help of any God or goddess or any other thing for the matter of that. Further, it was his firm conviction that those who did so, did it through ignorance and through a superstitious conception of life.

However, he thought that if the Master could get his initiation from him, and proceed along the sadhana of the Jnana path, all such superstitious beliefs would soon disappear from his mind. So he held in his mind from Sri Ramakrishna at that time on that point ; but he said to him only this much that before he could be initiated into the path of the Vedanta sadhana it was imperative for him to take proper initiation of Sannyasa and give up his *sikha* and the sacred thread, in accordance with the injunction of the scriptures. At first Sri Ramakrishna hesitated to accede to the request of Tota. He said that he had absolutely no objection to undergo the initiation of Sannyasa for the Vedantic sadhana, if it could be done secretly, but he could never do it openly as that would give a terrible shock to the already bereaved heart of his own old mother. Tota Puri understood his reasons and agreed very sympathetically to initiate him into the life secretly when the proper time for it would come. Then Tota Puri went to the northern part of the Temple Garden and spread his seat under the beautiful Panchavati trees.

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## NOTES OF THE MONTH.

"At any price that I can pay let me own myself." This bidding, this voice of freedom which drives a man to own himself has upheld him through his steps on that road of progress which he had to capture inch by inch by steady and persistent fighting. "The bidding comes", says the new rector of St. Andrew's University in the course of his rectorial address, "direct as a beam of light, from that past when man had grown into his present shape, which past, could we question it, would probably refer us to a past unmeasurably remoter still, whose creature, not yet man, felt within him that it was not well for him to jackal round another brute's kill, even if he went hungry for a while. It is not such a far cry from that creature, howling over his empty stomach in the dark to the Heir of all the Ages counting over his coppers in front of a cookshop to see if they will run to a full meal; and the principle is ever the same:— 'At any price that I can pay let me own myself.' And the price is worth paying if one keeps what one has bought. For the eternal question still is whether the profit of any concession that a man makes to his Tribe, against the light that is in him, outweighs or justifies his disregard of that light. A man may apply his independence to what is called wordly advantage, and discover too late that he laboriously has made himself dependent on a mass of external conditions for the maintenance of which he sacrificed himself. So he may be festooned with the whole haberdashery of success and go to his grave a castaway."

Are possessions worth possessing? Certainly, if the possessor does possess himself. A bondsman, a slave cannot be said to own anything so long as he himself is counted among his master's chattels and goods. He may be pampered and fed and kept in luxury and indolence, that would only make him a greater slave. The highest right and the only right worth having is the right to possess one's ownself. He who forsakes all for the sake of freedom, gains all. He who forsakes freedom to gain a little pleasure or to be allowed to drag on a slavish existence loses life, pleasure and everything else. By freedom, here, we mean some-





thing infinitely more than the right which citizens in civilized countries possess to vote for the type of government which they would collectively have. True freedom transcends all institutions. It is based upon truth and is of the nature of truth. It makes no compromises, it neither loves nor hates. Even the gods cannot vanquish the truly free man. The inner citadel where his proud unbending spirit lives is his own for ever and for ever. The keys of the portals of that citadel are in his hands and no coaxing or threatening would ever make him part with those keys. His body may be fettered, but his invincible soul would defy all tyranny. He may be cast into dark dungeons, but that will not make him lose his determination to own himself. Death has no power over him. If he is slain, the proud soul escaping from the body would in the strain of Socrates declare, "Enslave me if you can only catch me". The man who has realised true freedom can never be enslaved. For what are those fetters which enslave the soul of a man and make him walk in the path of sham and falsehood? First there is the love of fame and power, the false glamour of which decoys a man to forsake the path of truth. He begins by conceding little bits of the inner light and ends by enmeshing himself completely. He walked in the path of sham and falsehood, perhaps, with the idea of leading the multitude; in the end he finds that he is led—in chains, under the sway of the passions of the multitude. He longs for the solitude which he once enjoyed and the right to own himself; if the spark of freedom that holds up his soul is not wholly extinguished, he would stand up as a man shake off the shackles that bind him and declare himself free. Freedom is of the spirit. We may speak of social, economic political and religious freedom as so many different things; but as a matter of fact, there are so many different phases of the same thing. The principle that underlies all these different phases of freedom is one and the same. The price must be paid, no matter how high the price may be. No trick or jugglery would help a man to achieve his freedom; the price must be paid to the last pie. The aspirant for *Moksha* betakes himself to severe austerities, spurning all the pleasures of the world; the gods often tempt him with celestial pleasures, such as the sovereignty of the three worlds, if he resists all temptations he conquers in the end and achieves everlasting freedom. If in a moment of weakness, he



yields, he loses everything. Freedom is of the spirit and consequently is higher than life itself. The martyr at the stake and the patriot who marches on to sure death know that the loss which they are willing to sustain is nothing in comparison to the inestimable gain which awaits them. Life is such a petty affair and death is absolutely certain and the man of discrimination knows that the highest that can be achieved in life is to live and die for an ideal ; and the voice of freedom declares that all other ideals are to be sought for and obtained within the ideal of freedom.

The address of the rector of St. Andrew's confines itself mainly to one phase of freedom, that of personal independence. "It signifies," he says, "the blessed state of hanging on to as few persons and things as possible, and it leads up to the singular privilege of a man owning himself. The desire for independence has been, up to the present, an ineradicable human instinct, antedating even the social instinct". The rector went on to show how by acts of self-denial man gained the glorious privilege of being independent. "The initial payments on the policy of one's independence", says he, "must be financial, by no means for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith towards oneself, primarily out of the drinks that one does not too continuously take; the maidens in whom one does not too extravagantly rejoice, the entertainments that one does not too systematically attend or conduct; the transportation one does not too magnificently employ; the bets one does not too generally place, and the objects of beauty and desire that one does not too generously buy. Secondly, those revenues can be added to by extra work undertaken at hours before or after one's regular work, when one would infinitely rather rest or play." Thus in short, he upholds the economic basis of independence. The thirst for luxury in the midst of economic poverty has been the cause of the enslavement of nations by other nations. The continuance of such enslavement is possible, so long as the cause of it continues. The cause is the immoral thirst for luxury and the remedy for it is self-denial. Not that negative sort of self-denial which takes its refuge in laziness and indolence and refuses to taste of the good things of life, possibly because it cannot get at them. The right sort of self-denial urges a man to

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AND  
INDE-  
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toil ceaselessly, to procure the price that he has to pay for owning himself. Laziness is the highest form of luxury, and the man who indulges in it wants no other fetters to enslave himself.

He who toils for his independence cannot afford to be lazy, for he knows that every minute lost in indolence adds one more link to the chain that binds him. He is thrifty and gathers gold by all honourable means. "Not for to hide in a hedge, nor for the train attendant, but for the glorious privilege of being independent." Fortune may stand at his door ready to shower her blessings upon him, but the lazy man who sleeps away his time would die in misery and poverty. Poverty is a despicable thing. Of course, we do not mean by poverty that honest indigence which strives its best to get over the want which society and circumstances forced upon it. Such want deserves all help but the poverty brought about by laziness and indolence is altogether contemptible.

It is a privilege to help others. The man who helps others raises himself; he who receives help loses the privilege of owning himself. Thus it follows that man should receive as little help from others and give as much as he can. He who has put himself under an obligation to others loses a part of his personal independence. The man who hangs on to others cannot give full play to his own self-expression. "When I wished to claim my independence and to express myself according to the latest lights of my age, it was disheartening to be told that I could not expect to be clothed, fed, taught, amused and comforted—not to say, preached at—by others, and at the same time practise towards them a savage and thorny independence." These words of the rector of St. Andrew's may appear to mean that complete self-expression is incompatible with the interdependence which society imposes upon its members. But in truth, there is no incompatibility, for such interdependence being of the nature of a contract which expects certain privileges on the performance of certain duties does not stand in the way of true personal independence. Addressing his young hearers the rector went on to say, "I imagine that you, perhaps, may have assisted at domestic conferences on these lines; but I maintain that we are not the unthinking asses that our elders called us. Our self-expression may have been a trifle crude, but the instinct that

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prompted it was, that primal instinct of independence which antedates the social one, and makes the young at times a little difficult. It comes down from the dumb and dreadful epoch when all that Man knew was that he was himself, and not another; and therefore the loneliest of created beings; and you know that there is no loneliness to equal the loneliness of youth at war with its surroundings in a world that does not care." We take Mr. Kipling to mean, that the dawn of self-consciousness was the distinct step which man took in becoming man. The Vedanta recognises this and goes a step further in saying that man has the potentiality to transcend his self-consciousness and consequently rise above himself.

Self-expression of the aggressive type found in young people and young nations provides them with the spiritual sustenance necessary for them to build up a healthy individuality. In mature life there comes the recognition of a higher individuality which aims at a harmonious self-expression, different from the narrow individual self-expression of younger years. The divinity in man

SELF  
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DUALITY shines forth when self-consciousness gives place to all-consciousness. But, let us bear in mind that man has to own himself before he acquires his divine heritage of owning all. The curbing influence of society crushes the young individual and consequently puts an end to his full development to manhood. On the other hand, the absence of the curbing influence of society on the grown-up man might tend to develop in him the wrong sort of selfishness of living for himself regardless of the interest of others. Thus it is clear that in youth, the individual should be given the opportunities of owning himself. After the attainment of self-expression the next step of self-effacement is taken up with the purpose of attaining to the higher individuality which rests in the Universal. The slave who wipes himself off, because he must, is treated with contempt but the free man who willingly sacrifices himself at the altar of humanity attains godliness. First be a free man, then sacrifice yourself. Consequently in youth a man makes all the sacrifices to own himself and to acquire those talents which he may later on spend in the service of others. He knows that he cannot own himself, if he has naught to give society in return to the rationns which society provides him with. No act of self-denial is





considered too high by the man who has set about to own himself. We shall quote Mr. Kipling again; addressing the students he says, "among the generations that have preceded you at this university were men of your own blood—many and many—who did their work on the traditional sack of peasemeal or oatmeal behind the door—weighed out and measured with their own hands against the cravings of their natural appetites. These were men who intended to own themselves, in obedience to some dream, teaching or word which had come to them. They knew that it would be a hard-and-long task, so they set about it with their own iron rations on their backs, and they walked along the sands to pick up drift-wood to keep the fire going in their lodgings. Now what in this world or the next, can the world, or any tribe in it, do with or to people of this temper? Bribe them by good dinners to take larger views on life? They would probably see their hosts under the table first and argue their heads off afterwards. Offer them money to shed a conviction or two? A man does not lightly sell what he has paid for with his hide. Stampede them or coax them or threaten them into countenancing the issue of false weights and measures? It is a little hard to liberalize persons who have done their own weighing and measuring with broken tea-cups by the light of tallow candles. No! Those thrifty souls must have been a narrow and an infractum breed to handle; but, by their God, in Whose world they walked, they owned themselves. And their ownership was based upon the truth, if you have not your own rations you must feed out of your tribe's hands, with all that implies. Should any of you care to own yourselves on these lines, your insurances ought to be effected in those first ten years of a young man's life, when he is neither seen nor heard."

The above remarks find their application equally well to the case of a nation which sets about to own itself. The first step in the attainment of national freedom is the strengthening of the national consciousness. Even as an individual feels that he is himself and not another so should a nation feel that it is itself and

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be paid to the last pie. National thrift breaks the chain that fetters a nation as surely as luxury in the midst of poverty enslaves it. It is criminal for a poor nation to spend any money in buying luxuries. The individual who sets about to own himself has to manage it all by himself, this fact applies with greater force to a nation which seeks to own itself. We shall conclude by quoting from the instructive address of Mr. Kipling that portion wherein he exhorts his young constituents to cultivate those virtues which led to the greatness of their forefathers. "There is no need," said he "for the individual who intends to own himself to be too pessimistic. Let us, as our forefathers used to, count our blessings. You my constituents enjoy three special ones. First, thanks to the continuity of self-denial on the part of your own forefathers, the bulk of you will enter professions and callings in which you will be free men—free to be paid what your work is worth in the open market, irrespective of your alleged merits or your needs. Free, moreover, to work without physical molestation of yourself or your family as long and as closely as you please; free to exploit your own powers and your own health to the uttermost for your own ends. Your second blessing is that you carry in you your land's history and in your hearts the strongest instinct of inherited continuity, which expresses itself in your passionate interest in your own folk, your own race, and all its values. History shows that, from remote ages, the Scots would descend from their heather and associate together on the flat for predatory purposes; which now takes the form of raiding the world in all departments of life—and Governments. But at intervals your race, more than others, feels the necessity for owning itself. Therefore it returns in groups, to its heather, where, under camouflage of "games" and "gatherings," it fortifies itself with the rites, incantations, passwords, raiment, dances, food and drink of its ancestors, and re-initiates into its primal individualism. These ceremonies, as the Southern races know to their cost, give the members of your race fresh strength for renewed frays. And that same strength is your third and chief blessing."

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## THE PROGRESSIVE RELIGION.

*A Lecture by Srimath Swami Abhedananda, delivered  
at the Brahma Mandir, Darjeeling, June 9th, 1923.*

Sisters and brothers of the Brahma Samaj, friends, ladies and gentlemen,

Before going into the subject of this evening allow me to give my hearty thanks to Mrs. Sarker through whose kindness I have been given this opportunity of addressing you. This occasion reminds me of those days when I held conversation with Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore, heard the eloquent speeches of Keshab Chandra Sen, Pratap Chandra Mazumder and Shiba Nath Sastri and saw Bejoy and many of the leaders of the Brahma Samaj sitting in Dakshineswara Temple garden, at the feet of my Great Master Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa who is now known all over the world and regarded by many as the *Yugavata* or the great spiritual master of this age. I remember how my master loved those great leaders of the Brahma Samaj, I also remember that my illustrious *Guru Bhai* or spiritual brother, the world renowned Swami Vivekananda, used to be at one time an active member of the Band of hope organised by the Brahma Samaj. Thus there has always been a link of friendship and close relation between the members of the Brahma Samaj and the disciples and followers of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. It is not an outward relation but a spiritual relation. Therefore I stand before you not as a spiritual teacher, nor as a reformer but as your friend and brother who has devoted his life to the practising, preaching and teaching of the great and eternal religion of our holy motherland.

It may not be out of place to say a few words describing how I happened to spend over twenty-five years in Europe and America. Over a quarter of a century ago in 1896 A. D., Swami Vivekananda called me to come over to London to take charge of the work which he started there. I responded to the call and sailed for London. After giving me the charge of his classes Swami Vivekananda returned to our motherland. I conducted the Vedanta classes successfully and delivered many public lectures in England for over a year and then I was requested to come to New York



and be the head of the Vedanta Society which was in its infancy. I organised this society and had it incorporated under the laws of the state of New York. I delivered lectures in the principal universities of America and Canada, met the best scholars and professors like Prof. William James, Prof. Royce, Prof. Lanman of Harvard University, Prof. Jackson, Prof. Parker of Columbia University and many others. I used to come over almost every year to London and Paris to deliver public lectures on Vedanta philosophy under the auspices of the Vedanta societies of London and Paris. Thus I have crossed the Atlantic Ocean seventeen times and travelled extensively not only in Europe but also in North America from Alaska and Canada to Mexico, spreading the truths of that *Sanatana Dharma* or Eternal religion which we have inherited from the ancient *Rishis* of the Rig-vedic age. Many of our books are translated into French, German, Spanish, Danish and Scandinavian languages.

Today we have prominent centres in three capital cities of the United States, viz:—New York, Boston and San Francisco in California. There are three Swamis of our order at the head of these centres and two more have recently gone over to establish Vedanta centres in other cities.

Swami Vivekananda sowed the seeds of the Universal religion of Vedanta and I had the privilege to foster and help in the growth of those seeds into plants which are rapidly spreading their branches in different directions. At first, I met with strong opposition from missionaries when I tried to correct the erroneous ideas regarding Hindu religion which they had spread among the people. I had to fight single-handed against the attacks of those missionaries. Let me give you an illustration:—

Dr. Barrows in a public lecture said that the Hindus had neither morality, nor religion nor philosophy of any kind, whatever they have to-day, they have learned from the Christian missionaries. He was indignant when I contradicted such sweeping statements of untruth. Another illustration is that in Sunday school-books there were pictures of Hindu mothers throwing their babies into the open mouths of crocodiles in the Ganges. I said that I travelled along the shores of that mighty river from its source to the mouth but never saw any such scene. The people would not believe me until I said, if this were true then my mother





would have thrown me into the mouth of a crocodile also. How would I have come to America? I can tell you many such experiences but our time will not permit me to do so. This evening I have been requested to speak on "The Progressive Religion."

There are three great religions of the world which are more or less progressive. They are first Judaism with its two offsprings Christianity and Mahometanism, secondly Zoroastrianism and thirdly the so-called Hinduism or Brahminism with its offspring Buddhism. Each of these religions claims to be revealed by God Himself and is based upon the authority of the word of God which is their Scriptures. Judaism has its Scriptures known as the Old Testament, Mahometanism has the Koran, Zoroastrianism has Zendavesta, Hinduism has the Vedas and Buddhism has Tripitaka. Again Judaism was founded by Moses, Christianity by Jesus the Christ, Mahometanism by the Prophet Mahomet, Zoroastrianism by the Persian Prophet Zarathustra and Buddhism by Gautama Buddha, only the so-called Hinduism had no founder. This I shall explain later.

Each of these great religions—Christianity, Mahometanism and Zoroastrianism is called monotheistic. In other words, they believe in one God who is the Creator of the world out of nothing by his omnipotent will power and who lives in a heaven being separated from his creation as well as from his creatures and who is extra-mundane and extra-cosmic. The Creator is as separate from the creation as a potter is separate from the pot which he makes. This gulf of separation between the Creator and his creatures is felt most strongly in Judaism, Mahometanism and Zoroastrianism. In each of these the extra-cosmic Creator is regarded so far away, so great and so majestic that no creature could approach Him or His throne. In Christianity however, this gulf of separation was bridged over by the personality of Jesus the Christ who is considered as the Mediator. Long before the advent of Jesus, this gulf of separation was first felt in Zoroastrianism and an attempt to bridge it over was made when the conception of a Saviour in the form of *Soshyanta* was developed in *Zend-Avesta*. Zoroastrianism was the first to explain the causes of good and evil by admitting two Creators, the one was called *Ahuramazda*, the Creator of good and the other was *Ahriman* who afterwards became the Satan in Judaism, Christianity and



Mahometanism. Zend-Avesta tells us that Ahriman was at first a friend of Ahuramazda, an angel, then he rebelled against Ahuramazda and was expelled from the heaven. Those who have read Milton's Paradise Lost would remember this poetic description of this mythical story of Zend-Avesta. From that time Ahriman became the chief enemy of Ahuramazda, he brought evil into this world and has been trying ever since, to destroy the good creation of Ahuramazda. This fight will continue until the last day of judgment when the power of Ahriman or Satan will be destroyed, and the world would be renovated and the virtuous would be saved by the Saviour *Soshyanta* who would appear above in the clouds. The Jews accepted these and many other ideas of heaven and hell, of the resurrection of the dead after three days, the idea of the last day of judgment and of angels and archangels and of a Saviour during the Babylonian Captivity which lasted for two centuries between 536 & 336 B. C. Thus we can trace to Zoroastrian Scriptures the fundamental principles of Judaism, Christianity and Mahometanism. These three with Zoroastrianism have not made much progress in their conceptions of God and of the creation of the world as well as of the soul of man and of its destiny. They started with the monotheistic idea of an extra-cosmic personal God who created this world out of nothing and the ideal of the salvation of the pious souls which is the enjoyment of felicity in their respective heavens, through the mercy of the Almighty. These monotheistic religions have fought against scientific researches and persecuted those who did not accept their beliefs as the revealed word of God. The readers of the religious history of the world know how under the name of religion this world was deluged again and again by the blood of the innocent who were persecuted with fire, swords and guns. The fire of Inquisition was kindled by the orthodox Christians and millions were massacred and burnt alive at the stake for the sake of their faith. History tells us how Giordano Bruno was burnt alive in 1600 A. D. in the streets of Rome because he did not believe in the story of creation and other doctrines and dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church. These religions stopped the progress of science, freedom of thought and speech and suppressed all intellectual culture and humanitarian principles. Think of the time when Galileo was imprisoned and tortured in a dungeon because



he said that the earth was moving round the sun. But now the Copernican theory is the accepted fact of modern astronomy. In olden times religions tried to explain the origin of this universe and to solve the mysteries of life and death by blind faith in the writings of their founders and prophets. But since the introduction and development of the rational investigations of modern science all such false theories of wrong science which went under the name of religion have been thrown overboard by the best scientists and advanced thinkers of the world. During the last century science has made considerable progress, in its search after truth and is progressing rapidly in discovering the hidden laws which govern the phenomena of the universe. To-day in Europe and America few believe in the doctrines and dogmas of Christianity and in its scheme of salvation by the blood of Jesus. You will be surprised to hear that what the Christian missionaries are preaching here, the majority of the Christians in Europe and America is trying to forget. Very few of the modern scientists believe in the story of creation in six days out of nothing as given in Genesis, and none of them now believes in the creation of the sun after the earth was formed. I did not find any sensible person in America who now believes in the horrible dogma of the eternal damnation of the unbaptized children. This damnation of the innocent souls was settled in a synod by the majority of votes of clergymen. In India, however, the religion of the Hindus has always been progressive. Where the monotheistic religions have stopped there was the starting point of the monotheism of the Vedic religion. The Ahuramazda can be traced back to be *Asura maghava* or *Indra* of the Rig Veda and *Ahriman* to *Ahi* the dark cloud which was another name of *Vritra*. The Rigvedic mythology gradually developed into Ahuramazda, the creator of Good and Ahriman or Satan the creator of evil of Zoroastrianism. Time will not permit me to go into the details which prove that most of the boasted monotheistic ideas of Judaism, Christianity and Mahometanism originated in ancient India and travelled westward. Well has it been said by Ernest Renan in the "Life of Jesus" that the Christian Baptism, rituals and ceremonies were transported from the banks of the Ganges by the Buddhist missionaries, who preached the Gospel of Buddha in Syria and Palestine nearly two hundred years before the advent of Jesus. There is a belief among many advanced



thinkers of Europe and America that Jesus the Christ came to India and studied Buddhism under Buddhist monks for at least six years. Whatever that might be, it is a fact that Buddhism was the first proselytizing religion and that it was most progressive and practical in every way. But Buddha owed his inspiration to the *Jnana Kanda* of the Upanishads of the Vedas, popularly known as the Vedanta.

You all know that the Vedas are divided into two classes:— Karma Kanda and Jnana Kanda. Karma Kanda is the ritualistic portion and the Jnana Kanda is the Knowledge portion of the Vedas. These are the Scriptures of the so-called Hinduism. Here let me tell you that the word Hinduism is a misnomer. This name was given by foreigners. When the Greeks invaded India they found the *Sindhu* river which they had to cross. Instead of calling it *Sindhu* they called it Hindu. This religion is nameless and without any founder. It is based upon eternal spiritual laws which govern our lives, as well as this universe. Therefore it is called Eternal religion (*Sanatana Dharma*). Its conception of God is progressive. It rises from monotheistic or dualistic, to qualified nondualistic and ultimately to monistic. It starts with a belief in one personal God *Ekam Sat* without a second. He was at first conceived as extra-cosmic Creator but the truth-seeing and rational minds of the Vedic age soon rejected that concept when they realised that God was not only transcendent but immanent too. He was not separated from nature but resident in nature. He is *Antaryami* dwelling within us. In Him we live, through Him we exist and without Him there would be and could be nothing. In the hymn of creation in the *Rig-Veda* we read the most beautiful description of what existed before the evolution of cosmos. It says:—"There was neither entity nor non-entity. There was neither sky, nor air, neither the sun, moon nor stars. There was neither death nor therefore immortality. In that absolute stillness when darkness was rolling over darkness there breathed the infinite Being but breathless. From Him emanated energy above and forces of nature below which gradually fashioned the process of evolution. First appeared Ether of space, then that which is gaseous, then liquid and then solid, the minerals, vegetables and animals and lastly man. This description is in harmony with the truths discovered by modern science.





The Vedas again say:—Know that to be the Infinite Spirit from whom all animate and inanimate beings have evolved, in whom they live and unto whom they return in the end. "Thus the Infinite Spirit does not create something out of nothing but projects the universe out of His own body. *Prakriti* which is the same as Latin *procreatrix*, i.e., creative energy is His body. "*Ekoham Vahu Shyam*" He divides himself as it were and appears to be multiform. He is both the material and efficient cause of the universe. He is the subject and the object. The forces of the universe are nothing but His will manifesting through the limitation of time, space and causation. He is male and female. The Vedas say:—"Thou O Lord art the man and the woman. Thou art the boy and the girl. Thou art the old man tottering on the staff. Thou appearest in many forms". Compare this grand idea with the childish myth of Genesis which says that woman was created out of a man's rib to serve him and to become like a toy for his pleasure. Furthermore the Biblical story makes woman, the tool of Satan and the scape-goat for man's evil propensities and condemns her as the cause of sin, evil, wickedness, disease and death which were brought by Satan through the first woman who was tempted by him. The Christian churches which believe in such Biblical myths are against all progress. Christianity has never given suffrage and freedom to woman. Even now there is a line in English cathedrals which women are not allowed to cross. Churchianity does not allow women in the ministry. Wherever there is progress among womanhood in Europe and America, there is the triumph of science and common-sense over orthodox dogmas of Christianity. The churches do not believe in the female Angels. In India, Hindu religion has given infinite scope for progress to both men and women. The women have equal rights with men. For the Vedas say that the Lord divided Himself into two equal halves, the one part became masculine and the other feminine, moreover the women were Mantra Drāstri in the Rig-Veda. Women were always respected, honored in India. Manu says:—"Where women are honored there the gods rejoice". Again "One mother is greater than a thousand fathers". The present degradation of women among the Hindus is the result of foreign rules in India for nearly 1000 years. It is not on account of their religion. The *parda* system was introduced by the Maho-



medans. In Maharastra and other parts of India where the Mahomedans could not rule, the women go out without veiling their faces. The Hindu Shastras regard womanhood as divine motherhood on earth. Bhagavan Sri Ramkrishna elevated the position of women by accepting his first spiritual Guru in the form of a woman Brahmacharini. To-day our country needs Brahmacharinis who will be the teachers of men. Upon such women (Bramacharinis) depend the future of our country and nation. It is a great pity that there are no such schools for training *Brahmacharis* among boys and *Brahmacharinis* among girls. The earnest and sincere followers of the *Sanatana Dharma* should establish such *Brahmacharya Schools* for boys and girls. By Progressive Religion I do not mean that doctrine which teaches that the human souls will go on progressing throughout eternity without coming to any end at any time. The believers in this doctrines do not realize that the ultimate goal of the human soul is perfection as Christ said:—“And ye shall be as perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect.” Progress implies imperfection at each step, therefore eternal progress means eternal imperfection, which is absurd. We cannot believe in a God who is progressive or in other words a God who is progressing from less perfect state to perfection. As God is perfection itself, and as He is the ultimate goal of the universe so He is the end of all progress or in other words, all progress ends in God or perfection. The essential aim of the Progressive Religion is God consciousness. It is being and becoming God. From God we have come and shall eventually become God and reach perfection. The Progressive Religion therefore leads the seekers after truth from monotheistic or dualistic conception of God to qualified nondualistic conception and from that again to absolute nondualism or monism. No other religion does that so well as the universal religion of Vedanta. Therefore by the Progressive Religion I mean this universal religion of Vedanta. It teaches that the whole world must be covered by God who is *one without a second*. It is not true that the God of the Christians is different from the God of the Mahomedans or of the Hindus. For the attributes of God which are given by the Christians, Mahomedans and Hindus are the same. Therefore the Rig-Veda says:—“That which exists is one, men call it by various names.” Bhagavan Sri Ramkrishna also said:—As the same substance “water” is called



by various names such as *Pani, Vari, Jalam, Eau, Wasser, Aqua, &c.*, so the same universal Spirit (God) is called Jehova by the Jews, Father in Heaven by the Christians, Allah by the Mahometans, Ahuramazda by Parsees, Brahna by the Brahmos, Vishnu, Shiva, Rama or Divine Mother by different sects of the Hindus. Some people say that God of the Europeans must be "white" and God of black people must be *black*. Therefore the white Christians paint Christ with golden hair and blue eyes. But I have seen in Italy dark baby Christs in the arms of Modonnas. Such color distinction in God is foolish and absurd. Furthermore the Progressive Religion teaches that God is all in all, matter is not separate from God who is all pervading. He dwells in every atom, in every *electron*, and yet He is in the Infinite space. He dwells in the mineral, vegetable and animal forms. He is manifesting through all forms yet He is formless. The Upanishad says "He has entered into fire, water, trees and everything of this world". All religions which end in Dualism or Monotheism and do not go further cannot be called progressive. The religion of Vedanta is progressive because it starts with Dualism and ends in the realization of one ocean of universal Spirit where all phenomena rise like waves and play for a time and again enter into the ocean at the time of dissolution. In the Upanishads an illustration is given to show how the Almighty Being creates the universe out of his own body, projects it in the external space and again swallows it up by saying:—"As a spider creates a thread, projects it outside and swallows it up again, so the Lord creates the universe out of *Prakiriti* which is His body, and destroys it at the end of a cycle. Destruction is nothing but the reversion of an effect into its causal state. The Progressive Religion teaches that when everything has come from God how can any soul be born in sin and iniquity as the Christians believe. On the contrary it tells us that Humanity is Divinity, that all souls are potentially Divine, that each one being a part of God is "Narayana". There is no such thing as the "untouchables". How can Narayana be untouchable to another Narayana? Sri Krishna says in the Gita:—"A wise man should see the same Divinity in all. The Vedas also declare:—"God has infinite heads, infinite eyes, infinite feet." In other words He sees through all eyes, He hears through all ears, He thinks through all minds. He is the



*Virat Purusha.* In Him we live and move and have our being. Just as in our body there are innumerable minute living cells each of which has a life and mind of its own, so in the body of the *Virat Purusha* we are like those cells, infinitesimally small beings with our minds, intellects, senses and physical forms. We were not created out of nothing. The idea of the creation of something out of nothing is absurd. It was rejected by the great thinkers of the Vedic age. It is said in the Upanishads: A sage was giving instructions to his son about the creation of the world. He argued "Some people believe that this world has come out of nothing" but my dear child, how can something come out of nothing" The best thinkers of Europe accepted this absurd and impossible dogma until it was exploded by modern science about the middle of the last century. In this Progressive Religion of Vedanta there is no room for idolatry. There is no idol worship among the Hindus, but there is the worship of the Ideals. Idols are nothing but symbols like the Cross and Crescent. They are mere aids to concentration. I have seen more idolatry among the Roman Catholic Christians in Italy than I see in India. The Italian peasants beat the statue of Bambino (Baby Christ) with a stick when their prayers are not fulfilled. The Hindus, however, never practise such gross idolatry. They realize that as God is all-pervading, He is in a stone. If any one worships the all-pervading Spirit standing before a stone image has he done any wrong? The Omniscient Lord accepts the spirit of his worship and his devotion, and fulfils his prayers. In one of the new sayings of Christ we read:—"Raise the stone there you will find me, cleave the wood there I am." The Progressive Religion teaches equal rights of husbands and wives, that wife is a spiritual helpmate of a man (*Saha Dharmini*). A man should look upon woman as a representative of the (*Jaganmata*) Divine Mother, and the wife should regard her husband as *Narayana*. There should be mutual love and harmony. If this Ideal is practised there should be no divorce on account of incompatibility of temper. They should serve each other through real love and devotion. A marriage where there is no love but mere contract is nothing but prostitution. But where there is true love there is God. There the true relation between a husband and a wife is everlasting. Holding this ideal of true love as the real bond between a husband and a wife the Hindus of the higher castes do not believe in a divorce just in the





same way as a Roman Catholic Christian does. But the Shastras allow divorce for special reasons, like Leprosy or any other incurable disease, and it is practised by the Hindus of lower castes in India.

The Progressive Religion show the way to salvation through unselfish works. Charity is one of the best means of becoming unselfish. Every time we give anything to the poor we sacrifice that thing and thus cut our *attachment* to material possessions. It also teaches that all unselfish works must proceed from the feeling of love and must not seek results in return of labor. Through this kind of unselfish work and service to humanity or god dwelling in man and woman, also in animals, the heart of the worker will be purified. Christ said:—Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Purification of the heart (*chitta suddhi*) is the condition of God vision. Then he will be able to see God in everything and will become perfect like God Himself, what will happen in that state of perfection is beautifully described in the Upanishad:—"When God is realised the human soul becomes perfect. Then all desires are fulfilled, all doubts cease, all questions are answered. Human souls transcending all laws of *karma* and nature, enter into the abode of infinite happiness and eternal life.

## CLASS TALKS.

*By Swami Ramakrishnananda.*

Bhagavan Sri Krishna in describing the real man, says that the real man is self-existent, uncreated by anyone, beginningless, endless, indestructible in every way, and infinite. He has no hunger, no desire, all-perfect, and being infinite he is all-knowing. That is the real man. But the real man is forgotten and in his place comes the false, apparent man, who believes himself to be weak, to be helpless, who is hungry and thirsty, having birth and death, and whose existence is very precarious. His idea is that he was born with this body and will die with this body. This mistake is the cause of all our miseries and our greatest effort should be to put down this blunder which has robbed us of our omnipotence and omniscience. The only way to get rid of it is to renounce all these mistakes which we call *maya* and he who thus renounces is a *Sanyasin*. Whoever struggles with whole-souled determination to get rid of this mistake is a *Sanyasin*.



I pointed out to you the other day that everyone is really a *Sanyasin*, for everyone is constantly giving up in order to get happiness. There is not one who does not want to live and to be happy. Even the little ant is doing just what the greatest Yogi in a mountain cave is doing. What is it doing when it goes from one place to another? Is it not renouncing this place to go to that one? It comes to a grain of sand, stops and examines it, finds that it is not what it wants and gives it up to go in search of something better. So it moves on and on until it comes to a grain of sugar; then its journey ends for the time being, until hunger once more asserts itself. Thus it renounces one thing after another for something else. And how long will this little creature have to search? When will final rest come for it? When it will be able to reach an infinite amount of sugar? Then no matter how often hunger may rise, it will always find satisfaction; and perfect happiness will be realised. That is, only when it comes in contact with an infinite amount of bliss will its journey stop. That infinite amount of bliss is God. The Yogi is searching after the same thing.

When a man is young, he thinks that by worshipping his wife or his child, by seeking sense pleasures or money or knowledge he will be happy. But this life is not very palatable. It cannot satisfy his hunger long; after a time he wants to go beyond this life, beyond body, senses and mind. The body has in it all sorts of desires, it has stored up from past experiences. When he goes back of the body to the mind, he finds it also little satisfactory and always restless. Indeed, if we analyze this mind, we shall find it just like the little ant, searching here and there and never at rest. The mind too is full of desires and when the man discovers that these desires for sensual pleasures are the cause of all his miseries, he begins to doubt the validity of these pleasures. Then he says, as long as I believe that beautiful pictures, sweet sounds, name and fame can make me happy, then I shall have to cling to this body; as long as I entertain the idea that these sense-enjoyments can give me happiness, I shall have to be a slave to this body, I shall have to be born with it and die with it. Is there no other happiness beside this that comes through the channel of the senses? Can that happiness not be found anywhere else? Why am I happy? A beautiful garland makes me happy, o



a fine dish. But does the happiness come out of the garland or out of the dish? If I have a marble statue and give it a garland or a good dish, will it be happy? No, there must be some one in the statue to enjoy the flowers or the dish. So there must be some one in the body to enjoy the garland or the food. If I am sleeping and some one comes and sings my favourite tune, it does not give me pleasure because I am not in the ears and hence do not hear it. So I must be there to enjoy, I must feel that I am happy, that I enjoy.

If I put sugar on my tongue, it becomes dilated, a pleasant sensation comes and I am happy. If, on the contrary, I put quinine, the saliva recedes, the tongue becomes contracted, the nerves go back, there is a tendency to throw it out, I feel unhappy. I must have to conclude from this that sugar is friendly to the tongue and quinine unfriendly. When a friend comes, you open your heart, show everything you have, and make him a part of you. When an enemy comes, what do you do? You shut up everything and keep wondering, "When will this fellow go?" Now when can friendship take place? When two people are of equal age and are one and the same in tendencies and opinions. So that sugar is friendly to the tongue shows that the sweetness which is in sugar is reciprocated by the tongue where there is also sweetness. If sugar is the cause of happiness, then the tongue too is also the cause of happiness, because as soon as sugar comes, the tongue shows its own nature; and when quinine comes, it hides itself, so the nature of the tongue is not bitterness, but sweetness. This sweetness therefore must belong to the self.

But what is the tongue? It is merely an instrument belonging to someone behind the tongue, and that someone is the Self. Enjoyment is indeed the very nature of the Self, it is the very nature of man. Man is made up of enjoyment, just as quinine is made up of bitterness; and when he comes in contact with the same thing in nature, then he experiences joy. This shows that bliss is inside him, not outside. I do not open my heart to all sorts of people. Only when I find one of my own kind do I open it. Therefore if it opens at the approach of sweetness or enjoyment, it is evident that such must be my nature.

Man also finds out another thing. He says, "Yes, bliss is in me, but am I the body? Or am I only a dweller in the body?" Then when he analyzes, he discovers that the body is merely a dwell-



ing house in which he is living for a time, but that he is eternal by his own nature. He wanted to get rid of death. Now he learns that death has no more power to approach him any more than darkness has the power to approach the sun. So he realizes his immortality. But in no Loka can immortality be realized. In all Lokas there is no safety from death. Then where to go? Now the difficulty is solved, I must go inside to the Self to be safe from death. I have also found that all bliss is inside myself, that my very nature is bliss.

These two ideas, therefore, have been realized,—I have bliss and I shall live forever. But there is a third thing?—I wish knowledge. Now the mind is full of desires, for a desireless mind is no mind; but I am blissful and eternal so I cannot have desires; and as mind is limited, I cannot be mind. I must be something beyond both body and mind, for I am not born, so I must be limitless. Mind knows many things, but there are many more that it does not know; therefore it can never get beyond the finite. Now whatever remains in the range of my consciousness must be known to me, just as whatever is within the range of the light of the lamp must be illumined by it; and as I am infinite, I must have infinite consciousness, so I must be all-knowing, infinite knowledge is mine.

Thus we see that the three ideals which not only angels and man, but also the lowest worm is seeking, can only be realized by going inside myself. How to go there? You need no money; you do not need to buy a ticket. Then why can I not go to myself at once? You may think that you can, but when you try, you find three almost impassable barriers: First, the world; second, the body; third, the mind. Can you go away from the world? Can you leave your family and friends? First, there is your wife, and your children. When you want to go, the sight of their weeping faces will prevent you. Arjuna said, why do I need to fight? Why must I kill my relatives and friends? If I am all-blissful, why can I not go off and just be happy in myself? He thought that Sri Krishna was self-contradictory in asking him to kill his own Guru, his own grandfather. "If you think *Gnana marga* is the best, then why do you engage me in a dreadful action?" he asked. Sri Krishna replied, "Arjuna, what you think so very easy





is not so easy?" And later Arjuna had to admit: "Yes, Krishna it is true, to conquer the mind is almost impossible."

But if you cannot conquer the mind, you cannot go back to yourself. Who is the greatest conqueror, he who has conquered the whole world, or he who has conquered his own mind? So, Sri Krishna goes on to say, since it is so difficult to subdue the mind, it is better to work; work is rather easier. Therefore he preached Karma Yoga to him. But every work implies limitation, for who works? He who is in want. The rich man does not work because he has everything. Work is based on the idea of want. "So," Arjuna says, "the very idea of work is bad and yet you ask me to work?" "Yes," Sri Krishna explains, "work is bad, if it is based on want. But there is another kind of work which is called *Karma Yoga*. Do not work because you want anything, but work because you have hands to work, because all your organs were made to work. Therefore work, but without thought of the results. You can command your legs, your hands, your mind to do whatever you like, you cannot command the results. Outside this body you can command your wife, your children, your own household; you may to a certain extent command this microcosm, but you can never command the macrocosm.

You are finite, so you have finite mind; but He is infinite and His cosmic mind is infinite. His conclusions therefore are not the same as your conclusions, and that is the reason why you are always at logger-heads with God. That is the reason why you are always fighting against God. You weep and complain that things do not go your way; everyone does it. When you thus fight, it goes by the name of ego in this country, and by the name of Satan in the West. When all fighting against God ceases and the will becomes one with His will, then we have Alvars and saints.

When the ego fights, God must go; when God fights, the ego must go. So go on working and leave the results to God. If the result is not palatable, do not get dissatisfied, for your tendencies are perverse and God's results are always good to every creature in the world. Therefore go on working and leave the results to God. If you work in this way, the ego will have to give way and you will become the most blissful of men.



Learning this Karma Yoga from me, Vivasvat taught it to Manu, Manu imparted it to his son. Gradually all the royal sages knew it one after another; but it was forgotten for long ages and now I am reviving it. Today I am revealing it to you, because you are my beloved and love me very dearly. Am I partial? Sri Krishna asks. No, comes the answer; I do not tell it to everyone because very few people will believe it. Nearly all men in the world will say, I have to earn my own bread by the sweat of my brow, what time have I for other work? Where is your God? Is he in the temple? If you do not give food to your God for one day you will die. Why shall I believe in such a God? And you ask me to work without caring for the results? Who will get them? God? Is he a good man, will He pay me properly? But you are not like that. Sri Krishna says to Arjuna. We are friends that means that we have cognate natures. And you love Me very much, you love none else but Me. Whoever will be a devotee, will hear this secret; but to get it he will have to be an Arjuna. (Arjuna was an incarnation of Nara). To learn this secret, you must be a true disciple. The moment you can raise yourself to the place of Arjuna, you too will get Krishna as your friend. Why does not everyone get God as a teacher? Because all are not true disciples. You must have God as your friend and no one else, and to have Sri Krishna as your friend you must be an Arjuna. Arjuna was a true disciple; therefore, the Lord says, I will give this secret to you because you will be able to be benefited by it.

People criticise because we keep knowledge secret, because we keep the Gayatri secret; and they say that the Upanishads and all knowledge should be thrown broadcast. This is a foolish idea. If we deliver a lecture in English to one who does not understand English, would it not be very foolish? Or if we show fine pictures to a blind man, would it not be altogether senseless? Today every boy can repeat the Upanishads, but has any Rishi or any sage come out of it? Sri Ramakrishna used to tell us that a parrot may learn the names of God and repeat them all day long, but when a cat comes, it forgets them all and utters its natural cry. Repeating verses by these people is just like the ignorant repetition of the parrot. To be a little conservative in communicating higher truths therefore is good.



Arjuna could not understand Sri Krishna. You are my contemporary, he said, even Yudishthira and Bhima are elder, how then can you say that you taught this Yoga to Vivasvat, who was born long before. How can I believe this? Well my dear boy, Sri Krishna replies, many births have elapsed of yourself and of myself; I know them all and you do not know them. Why? Because I am God and you are a man. We look the same, but there is this difference. What is it to be a man. What is it to be God? God is master of His body and mind and man is not. Man is he who identifies himself with his body. Man is he whom body imprisons, whom mind imprisons; is he who is a slave to his body, a slave to his mind; is he whom mind and body overpower. In my babyhood, Sri Krishna continues, I am as much all-knowing as when I am grown up, but you are a baby even when you are grown. Nothing can overpower my mind or my senses; whereas you are almost overpowered all the time. This knowledge is inside of you as in Me, but in Me, there is illumination and you are in darkness. When illumination will come, at once you will know that you had many births.

But can a man know his past lives? Yes. Yogic philosophy tells that everyone can know them. All that you have to do is to control your mind and senses. You must be self-helping. What does self-helping mean? What sort of life must you live? You must not depend on anyone. You must not put on any clothes, because for that you must have to depend on a weaver. So you must betake yourself to the jungle, clothe yourself in the bark of trees and live on leaves. Then when this world is wiped out, other lives will rise up. Anyone can do this. The only thing necessary is that this world be darkened.

### THE LIFE DIVINE.

*By Swami Vishuddananda.*

Well has it been said that the rapture of prayers and the ecstasy of devotion lose all being in one Being. The Kingdom of Heaven is within and it is in one sense nothing but the dedication of ourselves completely to this one Being who is God, deadening the love of self and completely wiping off the idea of 'me and mine'. The *summum bonum* of life is to discover our true self-hood in God



and make God our all in all. Is not this the highest possible devotion to Him? The true devotion consists in consecrating our 'self' to God. It is the only indication of sincere love for Him. Every one can secure the bliss Divine, and he should seek it not in objects external but within himself. The Upanishads proclaim: "The knower of Brahman overcomes grief. He who is well established in Brahman attains immortality. He who knows Brahman attains the highest and he who knows the highest Brahman becomes even Brahman". The highest end of man is therefore gained when through right knowledge, he knows the absolute Brahman and recovers his 'self' in the highest Self.

We always dwell in sense-objects, remain quite content with the enjoyments of the flesh and cut ourselves away *in toto* from God. But, do we get real happiness in sense-pleasures? No man can, avowedly say that he is quite happy in the domain of sense-objects. That the sense-objects delude us every moment in our life and draw us away from our Ideal is a palpable fact which none can deny. We find in our every-day-life how we are chased by the phantom of desires and are often cheated by nature. We often lose ourselves in the meshes of sense-enjoyments being thus led for the gratification of desires. They are indeed the enemy of man, and stand as a stumbling-block in the path of our spiritual progress. Hence the practice of control of desires over sense-pleasures is the stepping stone to Religion.

"The world is transient, and having obtained this joyless world dost thou worship me", says our Divine Master Sri Krishna. This solid-seeming world is but an appearance, a shadow, the 'thing-in-itself,' is hid behind, and our puny ego rules supreme over it. Our efforts should therefore be directed to pierce through this nescience and behold, know and feel God in every object around us. The true Vedantic religious knowledge is a realisation, not talk, nor doctrines, nor theories. It is being and becoming, not hearing and acknowledging. There should always be a burning desire to discover the *Real Man* in us. We have to strive hard to break through the veil of ignorance and curb the passions, withhold ourselves from the allurements of the objects of senses and concentrate all our energy in the realisation of the knowledge of God. This is *Tapasya*. He abides in every object, but we can not see Him. He is nearer to us than we are to





ourselves, but we can not perceive Him. In fact, we live in Him, but we feel as if we are completely separated from Him. We have to change the angle of our vision and deify every object and feel His presence in everything. We should view the world not as it appears to us through the senses, but as it really is. Says the Lord Sri Krishna in the Gita. 'He who sees me in all beings and sees all beings in me, he never becomes separated from me nor do I become separated from him'. It is the true vision of Reality behind the phenomenal world,—the vision of Divinity interpenetrating every object with which we are surrounded. But, can this be practical? "Yes", says the illustrious Swami Vivekananda most emphatically, 'Our Rishis have seen God. We have now to realise Him within and cover everything with the Lord Himself, not by a false sort of optimism but by really seeing God inside every thing'. But steeped in deep ignorance as we are, we remain satisfied in the world of shadows and try to squeeze the juice out of it to feed our animal propensities, and thus by so doing, we weave a net of bondage around us and find ourselves caught in it. To what a miserable state we are brought by forgetting what we really are. And when the awakening of *Viveka* (discrimination) dawns on us, we shake off the fetters of bondage and betake ourselves to religious Sadhanas. *Viveka* and *Vairagya*m (renunciation) go hand in hand; the latter does not mean that a man should fly into the forests or shut himself up in a cave of the Himalayas. The Vedanta does not in reality denounce the world. By renunciation it means the deification of the world. The strong desire to be free from the shackles of Samsara must have its full play on the mind to know the world in reality. The intense thirst to know the Truth with an omnipotent faith in ourselves should come, before we travel on the path of spiritual exercises, and if we are earnest and sincere in our struggles, we are sure to achieve the great objective. Here begins our practical religious life.

'Blessed are those who are pure in heart because they shall see God.' The spiritual discipline is intended for the purification of the heart; when the heart becomes pure all the truths shall flash upon it. The various means and methods of Sadhanas are but the preparations to cleanse the heart of all impurities and make the Divine light shine on it. The pure heart is the best mirror and it catches every reflection that falls on it. We have to make the



mind tranquil, and develop faith in Him and worship Him as one dearest to us on earth. He is the 'mine of bliss and happiness' and if we cling to Him with implicit faith, we realise the Bliss Divine, compared with which the pleasures of the senses are of no consequence. As this faith in Him increases, our mind will involuntarily recede from sense-objects which will then turn stale and insipid and be concentrated in Him. We find in our lives in what an unbalanced condition our mind is; it rises into waves at the sight of every little danger and provocation and when we meet with the great miseries of life we are thrown completely off our balance: To have faith in him in the *sine qua non* of spiritual life. To stand all trials of life, to bear them with perfect equanimity without losing faith in God is the sure test of an intense faith in Him, when the unshakable faith is firmly rooted in our mind, our yearning unto Him increases and our heart pants after him. And then a strong desire to draw near to Him dawns upon our mind and we draw near to Him. Can a thief remain quiet when he comes to know that a treasure of gold is buried at such and such a place. Certainly not; he must have it somehow. So when we once come to know that He alone is the abode of Bliss and that all desires are satisfied in Him, when He is realised we can not remain idle but strive hard to reach Him. There are various ways to reach God and whatever means and methods we may adopt we must have intense faith in and attachment to Him in order to grow in spirituality. "The Lord, O Arjuna, dwells in the hearts of all being's says Sri Krishna" but it is our egoism which shuts Him out from us: "This egoism ("I-ness") binds us fast to the world and until we are freed from its clutches, we cannot attain to the state of perfection. The idea of 'me and mine,' which is born of this egoism makes us selfish, narrow-minded and self-critical and is the root-cause of our sufferings in this world. The one fundamental idea in all religions is 'not me, but Thou.' And he who says 'not me', the Lord becomes manifest in his heart. The less thought there is of this little 'I' the more of God there is in him. Hence we read of Sri Ramakrishna praying to the Divine Mother. 'I am Thy machine and thou art one working the machine, I am Thy chariot, Thou art my charioteer, I am Thy room, Thou art my tenant, etc. So this 'me and mine' is to be applied to God alone, He is the only 'me' and everything is His. When we come to this state, when



the Divinity within is made manifest we see oneness everywhere. Service, love and compassion to all beings are transformed into the worship of God seeing them as the veritable manifestation of the Divinity. The mere intellectual grasp of it will not do. The intellect helps us only to understand things in their true light. The inspiration must come from the heart.

The greatest help to spiritual life is meditation. It is approaching God by way of concentrating the mind on Him with senses completely subdued, being free from longing after all desires. It is dwelling steadily on Him in the flow of one thought or idea, as a thread of oil poured from a vessel. It is likened unto a lamp in a spot sheltered from the wind, a lamp which does not flicker. In meditation the mind gets fastened on God, it does not move or wander but remains quite absorbed in Him.

Pondering over the nature of Brahman constitutes Dhyana, Dharana is holding the mind in check and Samadhi is to repose on Brahman with the idea that I am Brahman. We know how difficult it is to bring the mind under control, and how it eludes our grasp every moment whenever we try to subdue it. Even the Blessed Lord Sri Krishna agrees with Arjuna that the mind is restless and hard to restrain. But it may be governed, says He, through practice and non-attachment. The freedom of life is attained when we become perfect in meditation. Sincerity and earnestness are quite essential in building up our spiritual character and without them we cannot make any Sadhanas fruitful in our life. Practice and renunciation are the two watch-words of our religion and upon them is based the edifice of religious life. Every effort of ours to enter the House of God should be attended with a firm determination, to perfect the steadiness of mind in divine meditation which will ultimately end in absorption or God-consciousness.

The body is spoken of as the Temple of God and the dweller therein is God. How are we related to Him and how we should approach Him? These ideas creep in when we first begin to seek God. The different conceptions of God dawn upon our mind when we pass through different stages of spiritual development; we always begin as Dualists and start with various relationships of life as father, mother, friend, etc. In the first stage we can not transcend the idea of body-consciousness, and so we regard Him as a separate being and draw Him nearer and closer to us though love



or devotion. We begin to approach Him and He approaches us, as it were, and find Him at last enthroned in our heart and He becomes a part of our being. Here He is not separated from us but abides in us. He is also immanent in everything and everywhere. Here we find that souls are all limited, they are not omnipresent. When they become pure and get expansion of their powers, they attain to Moksha and live with Him for ever. And so while regarding my body, says one of the greatest devotees of God, "as myself, I am thy servant; while regarding my individual soul as myself I am thy part but when regarding my interior self as myself I am the very Thou." All our Sadhanas culminate in advaitism, i.e., non-duality. We have to pass through these stages to this plane of consciousness where the individual soul becomes merged in the Universal Soul which is Brahman. The religion of the Vedanta if properly understood and interpreted is sure to help men and women of all creeds to know their purpose of life and ultimately lead them to the mine of Infinite Bliss. The Vedanta preaches the identity of the individual soul with the Universal Soul, as the Final Beatitude of Life. No religion has attained such a climax as the Vedanta and the Truth it declares is represented in its various aspects in the different scriptures of other religions. The effulgent Atman is at the back of all these planes of existence—physical, mental and spiritual and manifests its powers in them. It alone supports the universe. This we must recognise. All differences between man and man, between man and animal, nay between things animate and inanimate will cease to exist when we realise Oneness everywhere. This is the ideal of our life. We must know it. Each one of us can follow the sublime teachings of the Vedanta and turn them into practice in the every-day life. We must go to the Reality and our life on the spiritual plane is the only life worth living. It is the Blissful state of existence which we must strive to attain in this life. Then we shall truly find that we live and move and have our being in Him. The universe will then melt into God and we see the Divinity manifested within and everywhere. 'He who in this world of many, sees that one; he who in this mass of insentiency, sees that one Sentient Being; he who in this world of shadow, holds on to that Reality, unto him belongs eternal peace, unto none else, unto none else'.

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## GLEANINGS.

### The Great Mantram.

Mr. C. F. Andrews presiding over the Assam Students' Conference said :—

The principles of which I am going to speak came from the very heart of India. They have been embodied in the lives of the greatest Indian religious thinkers of the past and the present. It was a day of revelation to me when I first learnt to appreciate through my Indian teachers the Upanishads. It had been an equal joy to Mr. Pearson. When we went out to South Africa in 1913, our Gurudeva Rabindranath Tagore gave us the Great Mantram "*Shantam Sivam Advaitam*" and I cannot describe to you what it meant to us in the midst of the turmoil and anxiety out there in the passive resistance struggle.

I can well remember the day, when the poet first explained to me the beauty of the Isa-Upanishad. I said to him almost with indignation, "How is it that I have been here in India for more than ten years, and all this has never been told me before?" Perhaps, it had been my own fault, because I had come to India in my ignorance, arrogantly to teach, when I ought to have come out, first of all to learn. This reading of the Isa-Upanishad under the guidance of a great teacher seemed to show me in a moment of illumination the living truth of the world. At such a gathering of students as this, it is clearly not the time to enter into the philosophic depths of Upanishad research, and I do not intend to do so but I wish to take from the Upanishads some of the great and simple human interest, which even the youngest student here can understand and cherish.

#### WHAT ADVAITAM MEANS?

I would refer in the first place to that greatest word Advaitam. As I have told you, it formed part of our mantram in South Africa and we eagerly realised its meaning under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi himself, for he was a living embodiment of what the word Advaitam really means, namely, the oneness of all spiritual life, to see, (as the Upanishads tell us) "The universalself in all things and all things in the universal self." I feel that the greatest



of all debts the youths of modern India owe to Swami Vivekananda is the renewal in practical life of this faith in the Advaitam. I have worked with the Ramakrishna Mission workers in cholera camp and in famine areas and I have watched with joy how they have learnt to identify themselves with the sick and the suffering and the outcasts of humanity. I would ask you here, who are students, to practise in your own life daily the faith in the Advaitam. When the cholera-stricken patient is before you and you are afraid to touch him for fear of infection, say to yourself "This poor cholera-stricken man or woman is the divine self in human form: he is myself—"Tat Tvam Asi, 'Thou art that.'" When the stranger comes to you whom you may not naturally love, say to yourself the same thing—"Tat Tvam Asi." When the outcast comes to you, the untouchable, the namasudra, say to yourself the same thing,— "Tat Tvam Asi Thou art that." For all spiritual life is one. The Upanishads tell us further that the Advaitam is also the Avarna." He is without colour or caste distinction.

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This is your road—a painful road and drear.  
 I made the stones that never give you rest.  
 I set your friend in pleasant ways and clear.  
 And he shall come like you, unto My breast.  
 But you, My child, must travel here.

This is your task. It has no joy or grace.  
 But it is not meant for any other hand,  
 And in My universe hath measured place.  
 Take it. I do not bid you understand.  
 I bid you close your eyes to see My face.

*Swami Vivekananda.*

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## NEWS AND REPORTS.

### Srimath Swami Sharvanandaji in Western India.

The following public lectures were delivered under the auspices of the Western India Vivekananda Society, by Srimath Swami Sharvanandaji, President, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras.

Date.	Place.	Subject.
14th Nov.	Morarji Goculdas Hall	God, personal and impersonal
17th	Heera Bagh Hall	Dharma
18th	Do.	The Essence of Gita
21st	Morarji Goculdas Hall	Steps to God Realisation
24th	Marwadi Vidyalaya	The work before us
25th	Cowasji Jehangir Hall	Life after Death
28th	Morarji Goculdas Hall	Bhakti or Path of devotion
29th	Cowasji Jehangir Hall	The Vedanta and Modern Science
1st Dec.	Marwadi Vidyalaya	Dynamic Hinduism

On Every Sunday morning at 8-30 a. m. at the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Santa Cruz—a Series of lectures on "*The Vedic Religion*."

### The Swamies in America.

We are very glad to inform our readers that the new Swamies who went to America, in response to the call for more workers for spreading the teachings of Vedanta, have begun work in right earnest. Swami Prabhavanandaji, in the course of a letter to a friend, says the following :—

In Boston Swami Prakashanandaji delivered two lectures which were well attended. I find there is a great awakening in this country to know about our religion and philosophy. The people here have become tired of materialism and they want something practical, healthier and beneficial. I can predict, not with any prophetic vision though, that in course of time we shall have centres in almost all the cities of America. Only, you Swamies must be ready to come. Swami Paramanandaji's work has grown immensely. He will shortly go back to India and bring at least



three Swamies, if not more, to help him in his work. We stayed in Boston and had a very pleasant time with Paramanandaji. The sisters were very kind to us and treated us as their own... The new Swamies were introduced and they made short speeches in reply. We came to New York and there, we were received very warmly by Swami Bodhanandaji. We stayed with him a week. The members and friends of the Vedanta society of New York gave us a formal reception. We had to make short speeches in reply. From New York we came to Buffalo, Swami Raghavananda is staying with S. Bodhananda. From Buffalo we went to see the Niagara falls. It was a wonderful sight. There crossed the *Lakshman Jola* of the modern scientific age. Across the Niagara river hangs an iron bar and on that there is a car hanging. It is called the aero-car. We went from one side of the river to the other and then back again sitting comfortably in it. Next we came to Chicago. We saw all the sights worth seeing, went round where the world's Fair was held and where our Swamiji first brought the message of Vedanta to this country. Well, I have forgotten one interesting incident in connection with our reception at New York. One gentleman from the audience, who had the good fortune to sit and learn at the feet of our Swamiji, in appreciation of our work in America said, that the people of America wanted the Swamies from India to come and preach their philosophy here and not the so-called Christian missionaries to go like lambs amongst the wolves in India, and he wanted back every penny he had paid to these missionaries when he was young and did not know India. From Chicago we came direct to San Francisco. It took us four days and four nights in the train. Oh the beauty of the route! I thought I was again in the Himalayas. The train passes through hills by the side of a river and then snow-capped hills on either side. We had a lovely time in the train. There is an observation car attached to her and you can sit there and have a view around. If the people of America know anything, they know to enjoy what is beautiful. Many students of Vedanta came to receive us on the platform. Oh, they were so glad to get back their Swami after his long absence in India. Mrs. Petee (Durga Devi) a lady who occupies a flat in the Temple house, received us at the door and we had *Hindu dinner* (our Bengali dishes) with her and some friends.





The members gave a reception to S. Prakashananda. I had to go to the platform with a Swami's robe. S. Prakashananda in his reply introduced me formally to the members and I had to speak next. I spoke for a few minutes thanking them for all their kindness and as I would have many more occasions to speak to them, I begged excuse for the present and resumed my seat. Some of the members spoke in appreciation of their leader and welcomed the new Swami."

Swami Prabhavananda has begun to take classes on every Sunday and he expounds the Bhagavat Gita to the students. His discourses are well attended and appreciated.

The Vedanta Society of New York has begun active work after the summer recess. Swami Raghavananda is taking three classes a week. On Tuesday evenings he expounds the Gita. On Thursday evenings he holds a class to teach the students meditation; and he also explains on those days Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and on every Sunday he delivers a public lecture. He has already delivered the following lectures. (i) The Principles of the religion of the Vedas (ii) Nature of the Soul (iii) Psychology of Religion (iv) God, Personal and Impersonal.

The Swami also meets earnest students by appointment and gives them necessary spiritual help.

*The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram ;  
Kankhal, Hardwar. An Appeal.*

The public are no doubt aware of the existence of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram Kankhal, Hardwar, and of the humanitarian work which the Sevashram has been carrying on amidst odds during the last twenty-two years. At this late hour of the day, it is unnecessary for us to impress upon the public the great need that there is for centres of this kind in sacred places, for relieving the sufferings of the helpless, whom the Great Swami Vivekananda called "Daridra Narayanas" Hardwar being one of the most sacred places of India, where Hindus of both sexes and of all ages and castes flock by the thousands and daily from the very nook and corner of Bharat Varsha, a Sevashram conducted on the lofty principles of Seva (Service) and thoroughly equipped is a pressing need which cannot be ignored any further.



The work done silently and steadily in the Ashram is being indicated from time to time in the Annual Reports of the institution and is unnecessary to dwell at any length upon the same. We only beg here to remind the public of the following wants of the Sevaram set forth in pages (II) to (VII) of its printed twenty-second Annual Report (1922):—(i) Rs 5,000 for the building of the Night School which is now holding classes in the verandha of the Dispensary Building, which is a very inconvenient and unsatisfactory arrangement, especially in winter and rain. It is earnestly hoped that the generous public having the cause of primary education of the untouchable children at heart will contribute liberally towards the object.

(ii) Rs. 5,000 for the Rest House. This want is sorely felt in view of the fact that the friends and relatives of the pilgrims and other indoor patients who naturally desire to put up as near as possible to the Hospital have at present no accommodation in our premises. Further, outdoor patients coming from a distance, say of 25 or 30 miles, have got to be accommodated in the Ashram at least for one night; and for these two purposes, the Rest House is badly needed, and we hope our appeal will meet with generous response

*N. B.*—Appeal has been made in the Sevaram Report of 1922 for Rs. 3,000 only each for the Rest House and Night School Building, but our estimates have had to be revised in view of the rise in prices of building materials, etc. 160

#### EQUIPMENT

3. A sum of Rs. 2,500 is required for providing 40 bedsteads, necessary beddings, wheeled stretchers for the General Wards and glass cabinet, filter, etc., for the dispensary. We are glad to announce that a part of the equipment valued at about Rs. 1,000 has been received in 1923 from the following ladies and gentlemen. Furniture and apparatus of the value of nearly Rs. 1,500 is still to be secured, and we earnestly hope that prompt help will be forthcoming from the public.

THROUGH NARAIN DASS THACKERSAY MOOLJI.

1. Seth Hansraj Pragjee Thackersay, as trustee of the Kanji Moolji. Charities—4 iron bedsteads with beddings, utensils, etc.

2. Seth Ranchor Dass Premji—4 iron bedsteads with beddings, utensils, etc.



3. Seth Girdhar Dass Sundarji. 4. Seth Kalyanji, Sundarji, 5. Purusottam Kalyanji. 6. Srimati Dyokabai and 7. Srimati Kesarbai—4 iron bedsteads with beddings, utensils, etc.

8. Seth Tarachand Udho Dass—4 iron bedsteads.

9. Srimati Jawarbai—2 iron bedsteads with mosquito curtain frames.

10. Seth Madhoji Damodar Thackersay—2 iron bedsteads with mosquito curtain frames.

11. Lady Vithal Dass Damodar Thackersay—4 iron bedsteads with mosquito curtain frames.

Mr. D. N. Banerjee—One operation table, one dressing table and some instruments for the dispensary.

4. General Maintenance—Until the permanent funds have been subscribed, the daily maintenance of the Sevasram has got to be carried on by means of donations and subscriptions of the public. We have to mention here the enormous risk in the prices of food-stuffs, medicines, etc., which has rendered our work all the more difficult, and we trust the generous public will contribute their liberal mite towards the upkeep of the "Home of Service." We gratefully acknowledge the following donation from Seth Narayandass Thackersay Moolji of Bombay under this head:—

The Interest of Rs. 27,000 ear-marked for the maintenance of the dispensary.

5. Permanent Endowment Fund—Last but not least, we have to make an appeal with all the earnestness we can command to the proverbial generosity of the Hindu public for a permanent Fund of Rs. 1,98,000 which is a crying need and without which it would be well nigh impossible to carry on this work of relief. For it is a trite saying that no organised work can be done without a permanent fund being provided for. Now this sum of Rs. 1,98,000 is arrived at as follows:—

There is accommodation in the Ashram for 66 indoor patients and the maintenance of each indoor patient costs Rs 15 p. m. which requires a capital investment of Rs. 3,000 bearing 6 p. c. interest. Thus a permanent fund of Rs. 1,98,000 is required to maintain 66 patients. We would heartily invite everyone of the wealthy Hindus of this sacred land to perpetuate the memory of his or her dear ones by contributing Rs. 3,000



owards the maintenance of one indoor patient. Is it too much to expect that 66 rich Hindu ladies and gentlemen in this vast and holy land will not take long to donate the required fund and help to establish the Sevashram on a sound and permanent basis. We hope not. Those who are not in a position to contribute the full amount of Rs. 3,000 but who desire at the same time to give their mite to the permanent fund or under any of the foregoing heads may do so. Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by.

1. Swami Kalyanananda, Honorary Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Kankhal: P. O. Saharanpur, District U. P.

2. The Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherjee Lane Post office, Bagh Bazar, Calcutta.

3. The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Post office, Howrah District, Bengal.

We gratefully acknowledge the donation to the permanent fund received in 1923. Permanent fund:

i. Sett Narayan Dass Thackersay Moolji Bombay, Endowment of Rs 27,000 ear-marked for the maintenance of the Dispensary already referred to in para. 4 above.

ii. Sett Hansraj Pragji Thackersay, trustee of the Kanj Moolji Charities Endowment ear-marked for the maintenance of 4 beds.

(THROUGH SETT NARAIN DASS THACKERSEY)

iii. Sett Ranchordass Premji—Endowment for the maintenance of 4 beds

iv. Sett Girdhardas Sunderaji—1 bed

v. Sett Kalyanju Sunderaji—1 bed

vi. Sett Pursottamdass Kalyanji—1 bed.

vii. Srimaties Deokarbai and Kesharbai—1 bed

SWAMI KALYANANANDA,

*Honorary Secretary.*





# The Vedanta Kesari

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want. And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads, and believe that 'I am the Atman.'" —*Swami Vivekananda.*

December, 1923.

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

"But peaceful was the night  
Wherein the Prince of Light  
His reign of peace upon the earth began  
The winds, with wonder whist,  
Smoothly the waters kissed.  
Whispering new joys to the mild Ocean,  
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,

While birds of calm sit brooding on the charm'd wave."

There is a "close analogy and a closer inter-relationship between the microcosm of the individual-self and the macrocosm of the universal-self. The mystic knows that he has to transcend his natural life in order to attain Divine Communion and so he conceives of God as essentially transcendent to the natural world. Again in the phenomenal universe of external nature, all the

THE ANNUNCIATION. ever-varying changes and moods have their counterpart in the inner experience of individual mental life and the whole history of humanity is summed up in the life-experience of the saint who is nearing perfection. Evolu-



tionists tell us that within the space of a few months the human embryo has to pass through the vegetable and animal stages and in the first years of childhood the individual lives the whole of the experience of primitive humanity. Thus in the course of a few years the individual actually lives through the whole range of experiences which took several milleniums for humanity to live and experience. The mystic who is treading the path to perfection has to live, within the space of a single life-time, not only the whole of the past of the human race but the whole of the future as well. The coming of a promised saviour is an experience which every individual soul has to pass through in its journey from earth to heaven. The sceptic may doubt the birth of a Saviour in the external world but if he sincerely takes to the development of his own spiritual life, he would come face to face with the greater and the more important fact of the birth of a Saviour in the internal world. The first awakening, the awakening of the self to the consciousness of the Divine Reality is always accompanied by great exultation and joy. It is a great moment in the life of the individual. The realisation of the fulfilment of the long-expected promise breaks upon the soul in such an abrupt and sudden manner, that the wondering soul realising its own littleness and the unbounding greatness of the Divine favours bestowed upon it says in a mood of humble devotion, "Lord, is thy handmaid worthy of such favours?" The Grace of the Lord, descending upon the wondering soul, says in a clear voice, "The Lord is with thee," and the newly awakened soul, on hearing this new message of joy says within itself even as the Virgin Mother said, "What manner of salutation may this be?" This attitude of wonder soon gives in to one of pure joy and exultation and the spirit rejoiceth in the Divine favours which it has received, saying to itself, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things: and holy is his name."

The awakened self soon comes to a fuller perception of Divine Reality. Here it obtains a vision of the Absolute and a sense of the Divine Presence. Those sages and seers who have attempted to put into words what in truth is really inexpressible



tell us that the light of inner Illumination is incomparable in magnificence and far supersedes the light of a thousand times thousand suns. Light the first-created of objects

THE  
COMING  
OF THE  
PRINCE  
OF LIGHT.

stands, indeed, as a symbol of the Greater Glory from whence it emanated. The dancing sunbeam in the immensity of space is like a Divine Messenger bringing down to the Earth the message of Peace and Joy. The self that has been awakened to the transcendental consciousness, perceives the glory of the Absolute and in its endeavour to translate into words the indescribable vision which it has beheld, speaks of Divinity as Light. On seeing this transcendental vision, the saint rejoices in spirit and his heart gives vent to a hymn of pure joy, a *Gloria in Excelsis*. The whole world stands transfigured before his eyes. The birth of a Divine Incarnation is, likewise, accompanied by a state of peace and calm in external nature. They who conceive of God as a purely extra-cosmic being cannot fully grasp the relation that exists between Nature and Nature's Lord. The Vedas tell us that God is not only transcendent but is also immanent in nature. Hence it is easy to see that all great spiritual happenings would have their counterpart in external nature. When the Divine Child was born in the prison house at Mathura a celestial glory overspread the whole place and Devaki, the Holy Mother, was filled with joy and fear; fear, because of the evil intentions of the tyrant Kansa who had sought the life of the Infant even before it was born. The Child spoke pouring balm on the heart of the troubled parents and Vasudeva, the father, acting according to the Divine command takes the Child Krishna and proceeds to Gokula. The prison-bars open, the guards fall asleep, the river on the way parts its waters and the Divine Child is safely taken to Gokula to the house of Nanda. All along the way Vasudeva notices the peace and calm of nature, the showers of flowers from heaven and the song of *Ghandarvas* and other celestial denizens. Then again when the Lord came as Buddha, Nature recognised her Lord and laid her flowers at His sacred feet. Six hundred years later the Prince of Light came down once more to the Earth; and now the scene lies in a manger at Bethlehem. Here, as in Gokula, simple shepherds are the first to be favoured with a sight of the Blessed Infant. Nature rejoices and the heavenly host sings the glory of the Lord.



A star appears in the East. It is, indeed, significant that the star should appear in the East. The wise men there, having gained an insight into the working of spiritual laws, were able to forecast when and where a world Saviour would appear again. They knew that dense ignorance had spread over the land of Israel and that the Light would once more shine in their midst. The star

THE STAR IN THE EAST. could not have appeared to any but the wise men in the East, for they alone were qualified to follow its lead. In that ancient world, when the nations of the West were warring amongst themselves for greed and gold and lust and the Semitic nations were sunk in the mire of priest-craft and superstition the lustre of the spiritual ideal shone clear and stainless in the calm, blissful atmosphere of Indian forests. The Rishis in the forests of then, Mithila were, compiling and putting into a permanent form the Eternal Truths which are now the common property of the whole of humanity. Buddhist missionaries who, were spread all over the world, were preaching to all the message of peace and compassion. Again if we turn our view inwards, it is easy for us to see that the spiritual ideal, the star that would lead us God-wards always appears on the horizon of the mind, but it is vouchsafed only to a few to behold its shining lustre and to fewer still, to follow its lead. He, who would follow the lead of the star should forsake his home and hearth and all that he holds near and dear and follow its lead. On the path he should cast aside the temptations offered by kings and others and should follow the star with humility and devotion. Then he is sure to be blessed with a sight of the Divine Reality.

The picture of the three wise men kneeling before the Holy Infant brings vividly before our mind's eye a great spiritual truth. The cherubic smile that dimples the cheek of an infant baffles all the arguments of all the philosophers of the world. Can they understand it? No, they cannot. Yet it is possible for them to enter into the divine simplicity of childhood, if they would only

THE  
END OF  
WISDOM'S  
QUEST.

forsake their pride of learning and the finely-woven falsehoods of dialectics and approach Truth with simplicity and fervour of heart. The culmination of wisdom lies in the attainment of the blessed state of innocence which appears on the face of the young child. Wisdom's journey achieves its goal when it beholds the Divine Child. This





great spiritual fact is illustrated to us by the picture of the three wise men kneeling before the Divine Child in the manger.

When a Saviour comes down to the Earth, he brings with Him such a wealth of spiritual treasure that the whole of humanity finds a new lease of life to help it in its upward march towards the ideal. The poor in spirit need no more despair, for they can have their fill to the point of over-flowing. It is indeed a rare privilege to live at a time when a Saviour incarnates and comes down into the world.

THE  
MARRIAGE at His sacred feet and allay their thirst for spirituality  
OF HEAVEN at the living fountain which flows from Him.  
AND EARTH.

Heaven that seems far removed from the touch of the Earth, now lies so close to it. The darkness of ignorance is dispelled and the light from heaven sheds its mellowed beams bringing peace and joy on Earth. The remembrance of this celestial communion, of this marriage of Heaven and Earth is handed down from generation to generation and works for the uplift of humanity. After a time the vivifying force of the Divine message gets attenuated, not because the message in itself has lost its power, but because the spiritual force which it aroused in the minds of the early apostles, the men and women who heard the message at first-hand, gets itself worked up. The powers of evil once more assert themselves and in accordance with His promise, the second person of the Holy Trinity, Vishnu the Preserver descends once more into the world to destroy the wicked, to preserve the good and to uphold the Eternal Dharma. The Christmas-tide has its appeal to all humanity, regardless of differences of caste, creed and race, for the Lord's promise stated in the Gita is common to all humanity. To the men and women of Christian countries it is also a period of rejoicing and of exchange of greetings. To them we send many happy returns of the season and may He, the dispenser of all, establish peace on earth and goodwill toward men. May this ancient land of Bharata the soil of which has been rendered sacred by the holy touch of the feet of Sri Krishna, Buddha and Sri Ramakrishna stand as the beacon light to lead all nations, towards compassion love and godliness.



## TOWARDS RELIGIOUS PEACE.

BY

*Swami Suddhananda.*

*(Continued from page 698.)*

In my last article I have barely attempted to give a few suggestions regarding the steps to be taken to lessen the bitter feelings which the followers of one religion bear towards the other. Now I shall try to lay before my readers some of the cardinal principles to be borne in mind in building up the foundations of a universal religion.

i. A religion to embrace all faiths should not disturb the essential teachings of particular existing religions. Its features should be more constructive than destructive.

ii. A true religion should not rely on the personality of any teacher for its support and existence. At the same time it should give scope for any number of persons to remain within its fold. Its teachings should suit the needs of its votaries, according to the necessities of time, place and individual inclinations.

iii. All the four-fold path—Jnana, Bhakti, Yoga and Karma,—will equally be honoured.

iv. It will be as broad as the sky and as sublime as the deep ocean.

First of all we have to bear in mind that a universal religion should always encourage the constructive and positive elements we find in the different faiths. 'I have no time to hear about what opinion you have of others. Have you been successful to give out something fresh to the world?' This is the first test of a true religion. The prophets and Great Ones do not come to destroy, but to fulfil. At the most we can only say that what others believe in, is only relatively true. It is hard to speak of them as totally untrue. This attitude will only bring on more of strifes and quarrels and create more misunderstanding than peace, between the different sects. It is difficult to imagine how strong a dose of the poison of bitterness, the much abused word 'idolatry' carries with it. Even those who are generally known as monotheists create within their sect this hatred towards image worship and



thereby prevent all possibilities of a harmony between different religious opinions. We should examine the basis of our religion and faith and see how far they agree with proper reasoning as well as with our own direct experience. The scientists of the West have accepted the theory of evolution. The theory is unquestionably true as applied to the evolution of religious ideas too. If we only understand this, we will be kind and sympathetic in our relationship with other religionists. No one is really free from idol worship, in some form or other. When we view the different mental planes of the people at large, we will find that image worship is neither sinful nor degrading. All these forms of worship are only so many aids for the struggling man to rise up from one stage of evolution to another. The monotheist priding one his faith is still far beneath the realisation of the highest Ideal. Thus from a scientific standpoint, the different schools of philosophy do not contradict one another, and to establish the position of a particular school we need not destroy the other. Truth is always *One* and one only. Men of varying spiritual visions aspire after this Truth and as a result their realisations also turn out to be different. The ill-feeling between the champions of various sects is due more to nominal differences than to the essentials of their creeds. A special inquiry into this problem will further help us to understand that the actual fight between them always centres round some verbal differences. As a result many posing themselves as reformers turn out only destructive work. The reformers set to work with the pious intention of reinstating those faiths that have lost their original pristine purity. But impatient and prejudiced as they are, they do not try to understand sympathetically if there are in those faiths anything worthy of our consideration. And so they are not satisfied until they destroy those root and branch, in their misguided enthusiasm to reform. As a consequence quarrels and divisions are born out of this misunderstanding. Hence, I say repeatedly, do not disturb the faith of another. If we have to give anything, let us do that freely. The worn out and the weak elements will drop off of themselves. We may see the dark spots in a particular faith, but had better not point them out. Let us place in front of us that which we have approved to be good. What is considered beneficial by the public, will be unhesitatingly accepted by the people. A drunkard is not the least



reformed by our calling him names. But if we can make him reel with the intoxication of something finer and nobler than liquor, then the lower propensities of his mind will leave him once for all. That religion which always cries hoarse over the weaknesses of others, can never be a useful one, can never be permanent. One person perhaps is holding on to some particular faith. To point out to him his faults, is a very easy work. But when the reformer himself sets out to construct something new, he would find the very same mote in his own eyes, which erstwhile he was seeing in his brother. So it is better always to engage ourselves in doing something constructive.

2. The true test of a religion does not lie in particular persons who are its accredited founders. For religion always rests on the bed-rock of eternal principles. And such persons as would unmindful of these principles still hold on to a bare personality in a religion, always stand on slippery grounds. If the historicity of that personality is disproved then their religion itself falls to the ground. And so to save a religion, as values a personality more than its principles, is very difficult. Religion in its real essence, is too impregnable for opposition. Hunger, thirst, lust and all those weaknesses which human flesh is heir to are natural to man. But to rise over the limitations of the senses—in short to become *religious* is also a universal instinct in him. Whoever has this religious instinct well developed is accepted as a religious leader and holds a very high place in society. The proof of the teachings of a Buddha, a Krishna or a Muhammed is in us only. By accepting this broad basis for a universal religion, we do not deny the scope for personalities to exist in it.

On the other hand such a foundation gives an honoured place to every religious teacher of the past, present and future.

The illustrious saint Nischaldas has said, "He who knows of Brahman is Brahman Itself and His words are the Vedas." Whether his utterances are couched in Sanskrit or ordinary spoken vernaculars, his teachings are our sole means to remove the veils of ignorance.

We have only to accept this much: The truth has been revealed to us by our Prophets and Avatars. The same Truth to suit the different needs of the people has been revealed by other prophets and saints in other climes and languages





too. The very same Truth will also be given out by other Great Ones in the coming future. If we pay adequate regard to this fact, then all dissensions will be at rest. One word more. It is not the monopoly of these Great Ones only to attain to this high state of God-consciousness. You and I and all who strive can come up to their state, can for ourselves experience the very same Truth they preached. In a natural religion there need not be person to mediate between us and God. Man's relation with Truth has always been direct. But so long as we have not established this direct relationship with Truth, it is not sufficient if we simply speak about it, we have to accept a Guru who is our sole guide in our quest after the Truth.

All the great religious leaders have preached about the realisation of this Truth. But the modes of observances they have preached vary to suit individual needs. All these codes of observances are subject to change. A dispassionate study of the history of all religions proves this fact.

3. On the whole mankind can be divided into four distinct groups—the emotional, the analytic, the energetic and the power-loving. By the very nature of these differences religion also presents itself to them in different shapes. The energetic man of action loses himself in his work and for him the emotional and analytic temperaments have no charm. He wants himself to be fully engaged in active work. He desires to do service to humanity. His heart throbs at the sight of misery and his only dream is how to alleviate it and make this miserable world a heaven on earth. The emotional man loves to meditate upon the celestial beauty of an Ideal Person. He wants to dance and weep with joy day and night, repeating the holy names of His chosen Ideal. He does not at all like to question or reason with himself about his actions. He is contented with loving his Ideal. He who is power-loving wants to gain control over nature. He does not rest satisfied by the conquest of the external world. He wants to rule over the inner world too. He has devoted his life for the realisation of the one ideal of making his mind one-pointed and conquering it. The philosophic temperament says that he will try to understand the soul of reality in all things;—he will thus arrive at the Eternal Truth by dint of discrimination and analysis.



So in a natural religion there must be sufficient room for all these temperaments to exist. Those who hardly tolerate and look down upon others cannot give proper spiritual help for humanity at large. Is it possible to satisfy the religious craving of men of calm, cool philosophic temperament by a religion that gives scope to its adherents to melt in tears only at its soft teachings? And on the other hand men of soft and finer feelings would feel suffocated in an atmosphere that encourages *Vichara* as the only path of sadhana. Hence I say a religion to be considered universal must give an equal place for all temperaments and shades of opinions and satisfy the natural spiritual inclinations of all people. Such a religion should not only satisfy the scholar or the illiterate. Suited to the needs of the people, the old and the young, the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra, the so-called untouchables, in short, all should be allowed a place in this universal religion.

4. In our over-enthusiasm to hold up one religion over the other as better we almost always lose sight of the real grandeur and sublimity of its teachings. In examining closely what is connoted by "bigotry," we find that in its first inception our energy is more consumed in attacking the faiths and beliefs of other people, rather than endeavouring to fortify our own position. When later on the narrow-minded bigot will turn more and more within himself, he will find that his aim should not be to oppose and challenge other people's religious views. But on the other hand, a small plant to be protected from the wandering cattle has to be fenced round—so also a novice has to save himself from the opinions and criticisms of others. He must be full of *Nishtha* or devotion to his Ideal. Even when the aspirant realises with the extension of his knowledge that other people's standpoints are also true, he has to hold on to his Ideal with as much devotion as before.

A harmony of religions does not mean the giving up of all those unimportant details of particular religions and accepting only their essentials. In the paddy seeds the essential portion is the rice. But if we sow rice we cannot get any crop. We have to sow paddy for the same. So too we should not give up those unessential features of a religion. They too have their value. Persons who try to build up a non-denominational faith on this principle of clearing all religions of their non-essentials, do only add by their



action, one more sect to the already bewildering number of religions existing now. So long as man is limited by the gross sense world, his inner feelings have to express themselves in the outward world through the medium of certain codes and modes of observances. But we have always to bear in mind that rituals and ceremonials are not the be-all and end-all of our religious aspirations. Our daily observances should not be such as would impose upon a credulous world. There is a saying in English—'It is better to be born in a church, but bad to die there.' In the preliminary stages of one's sadhanas it is better to hold on to some outward symbols and ceremonials. As we go on, progressing on the spiritual path, gradually we must transcend them. This should be our duty: Strictly adhering in the beginning to some of the accepted lines of spiritual practice, we should in the end become completely non-sectarian in our spiritual outlook. But this can be achieved only when we get full realisation. In the meanwhile, in our criticism of other people's views, we should take the attitude of sympathy and tolerance. Without forgetting our ideals, as far as possible we should also assimilate those good points in our brothers' faith, that are helpful and favourable to us. The Hindu has not to become a Muslim or a Christian. A Muslim and a Christian also need not change their faith. Let every one train himself to progress along his own path. If we can work along these lines, before long we can expect the day when bitterness and enmity between the various religions shall cease—we shall see the birth of a religion which will be acceptable to all and universal in its application. In conclusion I wish to say that this is not the time for us to be wrangling over our different religions. Now the war should not be between ourselves. Let us flock under a common banner to fight our common enemy—*irreligion*. And let the heavens be rent with our joyous shouts—Victory to Ram, to Krishna, to Buddha! Victory to Jesus, to Mohammed, Victory to all the religious scriptures of the world! Victory to all the Great Ones! Victory to all the pure-hearted!

(Concluded).



## THE PATH OF DISCIPLESHIP.\*

*By Durga Devi.*

Back of the myriad of sun, moon and stars, back of this great universe, back of all created beings, is a force that is driving us on to perfection; a force that does not seem to take note of our sorrows and struggles, aims and aspirations, but is forever tempting us with the alluring objects of pleasure and hope of happiness, only to dash us down on the rocks of despair and disappointment. Life after life we are deceived by its glamour, until at last we realize that it is a cup of tantalus, ever receding from our grasp. And this is called Maya.

Hope is dormant in the heart of childhood. The whole is a golden vision to the opening eyes of a child. His will he thinks is supreme. He believes that everything he sees is for his enjoyment, until he realizes that nature stands as an adamant wall barring his further progress.

We are all running after happiness. The senses are dragging the human soul out. We are seeking for happiness where it can never be found. For countless ages we have been taught that it is futile and vain—there is no happiness here. But we cannot learn it. It is impossible for us to learn except through our own experience. We taste of pleasure, and a blow comes; yet we do not learn, no, even then. Like moths hurling themselves against the fire, we are hurling ourselves again and again on to the senses to find some pleasure there. We return again and again with freshened energy. Thus we go on, till crippled, cheated, we die. And this, too, is Maya.

After repeated blows and disappointments, after some tremendous bereavement that shakes the soul to its very foundation, and seems to leave us stranded alone upon a trackless desert, we are awakened, and at last stop to question why.

Why must we live, learn to love, only to be ruthlessly torn asunder from our beloved by death? Why? What is the reason? Why the cruel stab at our hearts?

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\*A Paper read at the Hindu Temple of San Francisco, U. S. A.





And as we look about us for an answer we find that all are suffering the same sorrows, and all are at the same time chasing the will-o'-the-wisp of happiness.

There must be a way out for us, we think, and we turn to God. At first, it is a seeking for possible comfort in the church or religion we were born in. And if we are really sincere there will come glimpses of hunger for the truth. Symbols and creeds no longer will satisfy us. We would know what is behind them, what they stand for, what they mean.

This is not as easy as it seems, for after a lifetime of self-indulgence we cannot expect an ardent thirst for righteousness will come overnight. The little desire that comes must be nourished until it becomes a great furnace of desire, a something that we are ready to sacrifice our all on its altar, before we can hope to attain any great results.

It may be accomplished in one life, or it may take many lives. All will depend upon the sincerity of the devotee and intensity of the effort to acquire knowledge.

And by what means is this great knowledge to be obtained?

Gita says :—"Know this by long prostration, by enquiry, by service. Those men of wisdom who have realized the truth will teach the wisdom."

"Know thou by what process it is obtained. Go to the teachers (Acharyas) and humbly prostrate thyself before them. Ask them what is the cause of your bondage and what the means of deliverance, what is wisdom (Vidya) and what is nescience (Avidya). Do service to the Guru. The Gurus who, knowing the truth as well as realizing it themselves, will impart to thee their wisdom."

"Even shouldst thou be the most sinful of all the sinful, thou shalt verily cross all sin by the bark of wisdom."

"Verily there exists no purifier equal to wisdom."

"Therefore with the sword of wisdom cleave asunder this doubt of the self lying in the heart and born of ignorance and resort to Yoga. Arise, O Bharata !"

Gita is replete with instruction in regard to learning from a spiritual teacher or Guru. Indeed, spirituality can be transmitted from teacher to student as tangibly as a flower can pass from one to another, a candle be lighted from another candle. Therefore



the great need of a teacher or spiritual guide to lead us over untrodden paths, dangerous, full of pitfalls as real as any on the material plans.

There is a Hindu saying that when the student is ready he will meet his spiritual teacher. The teacher will be ready also. When the teacher has been met and the student has been accepted then can he be said to have entered upon the path of discipleship.

The progress we make depends very much upon the attitude we maintain towards our spiritual teacher. Love, devotion, veneration, humility, service and obedience, are necessary. Once having accepted him, we must look upon him as our God. He is the opener of eyes. He is the link that will bind us to God. He is the boat that will carry us across this ocean of Maya. The Hindus pay divine homage to the Guru. When we have prepared the soil, he will plant the seed of spirituality. It is for us to tend to its cultivating. We must water this seed with the virtue of good deeds and right-living, and the sun of his spirituality will make it bear fruit.

We are now in gross bondage. Our aim is to free ourselves. We are caught in this mesh of the senses. We must extricate ourselves. We are now living in the flesh. We must transfer our consciousness to the spirit, our real self.

It is not a joke, this finding ourselves, not the work of a day. It should be not a nibbling at truth and expecting results, but the whole heart and soul must be pledged to the ideal, make it the one aim of our lives. Then, no matter how often we fail in our effort, we will feel the Everlasting Arms are around us, giving us new courage for another attempt.

We are told that it is the nearest of the near, the very life we breathe. Yet we are not conscious of it, and the more we allow ourselves to be tossed to and fro in this ocean of the senses, the farther away from our consciousness it becomes.

We are now "sons" of God. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," says St. Paul.

There are several ways to attain our object. The sages tell us there are four great ways:

The path of devotion, or love of God, where the aspirant will  
 in the lowest to the highest, seeing in them  
 the one beloved manifested through all;



The path of work, of Karma Yoga, where the devotee learns to work without attachment, without hope of reward, offering up all the fruits of work to the Lord ;

Then the path of meditation, Raja Yoga, where one learns to hold the mind one-pointed towards the ideal, until mind becomes transcended and we become merged in the Lord ;

Fourth, the path of Jnana, belonging to the analytical mind. It is the hardest path, and seldom is it possible to attain by this method alone. It is "Neti, neti," "Not this, not this," method. Analyzing all that comes before us, in this way we see thus : This is not God "Neti, neti." Senses cannot know God. Matter is not God. Mind is not God. For everything we see, hear and feel is material and subject to change, and God is the only Unchangeable Reality. So the Jnanin must ever say, "Not this, not this," until he has denied everything below his ideal, until he comes face to face with the truth. Most students follow two or more paths at the same time, but according to the strongest tendency of the student one will predominate.

Gita says : "Howsoever men approach me, even so do I reward them. I reward men by granting them the thing they desire, just in accordance with the way in which they seek me and the motive with which they seek me. For they do not seek for liberation. One cannot indeed pursue pleasure and at the same time seek for liberation. Therefore I reward seekers of fruits by securing for them their selfish ends. I reward the unselfish who do their prescribed duties and seek for liberation by granting them knowledge. I reward men of knowledge who have renounced the world and seek for liberation by granting them liberation. Similarly I reward men in distress by relieving them from distress. Thus do I reward all, just in the way they seek me. But those who worship me alone, they verily come unto me."

Take the path of Karma Yoga, where the devotee learns to work without attachment, not looking for results of labour, either in reward or punishment.

Gita says we all must labour, from the highest to the lowest. Man cannot live one moment actionless. Breathing is action, although done unconsciously, thinking is action and from that standpoint we all must work and live in action.



The natural man is tossed to and fro by the desires within him. Nature compels him to work for nourishment, for food and shelter, and by so doing a higher grade of intelligence is developed. He protects his home, his wife and family, provides for them. He seems to think very little about the outside world. That is the stage of selfishness, yet not without some lessons, for thereby he learns the first lesson of loving service. It is a long step from that to where he feels that he must work because it is right for him to work, not looking for rewards, offering all to the Lord. But it is a beginning.

The wise man works offering all to the Lord. "O Lord, I am the machine, thou art the Doer. My hands perform the work, but it is thou that guideth them. Of myself I can do nothing. Take my every action as a sacrifice for the purification of my heart." So cries the devotee.

The second path is that of meditation, or Raja Yoga. It has to do with controlling the mind and making it an instrument in our power.

Ordinarily, the mind makes us its slave. We must learn to control it and make it our slave. Let us be the master of our own mind at least. When we have controlled the nature within, we can control outside nature—they are one.

The nature of the mind is constant activity. It has been likened to a maddened monkey stung by a scorpion, jumping about hither and thither continually. So the mind, when uncontrolled, gives us no rest. We live and die trying to satisfy it with new sights and sensations, but to no avail. The more it has, the more it wants, and until we curb it by a little self-control we remain miserable slaves.

Raja Yoga teaches us the method of controlling the mind, and it is by concentration. A lake lashed into waves cannot reflect the image of the sun perfectly. So the divine self in us can be likened to the sun ever shining resplendent.

Could we but stop the blurring of the mind, keep it still, stop its thinking, holding it to one idea, our divine self would be revealed, the end accomplished. Heavenly bliss would be ours.

Desires are the enemies that shake the mind. By controlling the mind, we find our desires are controlled. One reacts on the other; gradually the senses stop clamoring until we at last forget





them. One cannot keep thinking of more than one thing at a time. If we persist in thinking of holy things, of God, read good books, our old habits are starved out, we drop them as a serpent sheds its skin, painlessly, and we wonder how we could ever have been enslaved by them.

Keeping the mind one-pointed, holding it to one idea, will not only bring great spirituality when directed towards God, but in worldly matters it leads to success, controlling environment, etc. The practice is the same, to attain worldly power and ambitions or great spiritual knowledge.

But once having attained to the power of concentration, shall we sell our birthright for a mess of pottage? Ye cannot serve two masters, says the Bible. You will love one and hate the other.

So when we try to use our powers to attain health, wealth and happiness, we have made an unfortunate choice. We have sold our birthright for a mess of pottage, which will do us but little good and give us no true happiness.

This using power attained through meditation is the subtle temptation on the path of discipleship. And there is no such thing as working for worldly possessions one day and for soul's deliverance the next. We cannot serve two masters—we will love one and hate the other. Perhaps that is why some have called him a jealous God, as there can be none else but Him. He is the pearl of great price. We must sell all we have, give up all save Him. That, too, is concentration. If thine eye be single thy body will be full of light.

Can we in one short life attain to all this by ourselves?

Some people boast that they need no teacher except the inward guide. Such are steeped in egoism, in the darkness of self-arrogance. How do these people know that it is the Spirit that prompts, and their own subconscious desire that leads them on?

When the Spirit leads, we make no mistakes. Yet we—most of us—are making mistakes every hour of the day. And the greatest is that of believing that the voice of our higher self is leading us in all things, when we are not yet attentive to the voice of our own reason.

The student who hears the divine voice within is he who has learned the lesson of humility, who would prostrate before any



spiritual teacher, begging for light and guidance; not he who is self-satisfied with his progress, no matter how much he has attained to.

Rama Krishna, though an incarnation of God, had several teachers or gurus, and he exclaimed, "We learn as long as we live!"

"We are told that the disciple, having come in touch with a teacher and having found him holy, should try to obey implicitly all his teaching. If he does not always understand, he should not reject anything, but lay it aside, as it were, like a mathematical problem. If the answer does not come easily at first, one tries again.

It would be absurd for a college student to question the ability of the professor to instruct him. So in spiritual matters, which are far more subtle and difficult to understand. If we could be as clay in the hands of the teacher, he would soon fashion a god out of us. But age-long habits must be checked, and ideas remoulded. That causes great resistance. The resistance is in accordance with the intensity of our own personality, or the strength of our tendencies.

We ourselves must do the work. But just as in climbing a mountain the going is made easier if the brush is cleared away, the chasms bridged, so our spiritual guides and teachers, who themselves have travelled the road and know the pitfalls and dangers can make our progress a comparatively easy task.

Swami Vivekananda, in his song of the Sannyasin, sings this wonderful refrain: "Let go thy hold. Sannyasin bold." Yes, we should let go our hold, on good and on evil, on riches and poverty, on joy and sorrow. A hundred times each day it would be well to repeat to ourselves these words, "Let go thy hold."

When something comes to annoy us, it is because we are holding on. "Let go thy hold." If regret comes from some loss of possession, let go thy hold and sorrow will vanish. If desire urges us along, let go thy hold on body consciousness. That is the great secret of the path of discipleship, to let go.

Our evolution has been made possible by trying to add to what we already possessed, and we have acquired the habit of getting. "We have succeeded in getting an intelligent mind. We have acquired the instrument. Now we must let go the old habit of getting, reverse our method, and learn to let go of things.



When in a forest, if a thorn gets into the foot, we take another thorn to get it out, then throw both away as useless.

So, to gain spiritual wisdom, the disciple must throw away that which has made him an intelligent being, meaning by that, dwelling upon physical and mental matter. When he enters the path, he turns a new page, new methods, new habits, new aspirations.

That does not mean that we must renounce the world, go live in a cave. But the mind must be withdrawn. We must mentally let go our hold on things.

Intellect, too highly developed, is a bar to spirituality, if all the time for it means that the heart has been starved. Spirituality springs from pure love from the heart. We must rise above the intellect to become conscious of our divine nature.

St. Thomas a Kemp says in following Christ, "It were better to feel compunction, than know how to define it."

That is the idea. It is better to be simple and humble than to be able to quote every verse from the Bible.

"Not by Vedas nor by sacrifice, nor gift-giving, nor with prayer, shall any reach Me. But by fullest service, perfect faith, and uttermost surrender, am I seen and known and entered into," said Krishna in the Gita.

Not by Vedas, meaning intellectual knowledge of the Vedas; not simply work, but work done as an offering to the Lord; not gift-giving, charity, unless one can do it without seeking reward, as an offering to the Lord; nor prayer from the lips, but by faith, fullest service, and uttermost *surrender*, is the Lord known and seen and entered into.

So the student should from the first try to learn this great lesson of "uttermost surrender." First, by surrendering our will to the will of Guru in obedience; to our neighbours by surrendering some of our possessions, and trying to cultivate this holding loosely to things.

Possessions do not bring us happiness, but if we hold on they do bring us much sorrow. How can we be ready to surrender to the Lord when we have not yet learned to let go our worthless possessions? Our progress is retarded by this holding on. All belongs to the Lord.



If we could be as little children! A child does not worry about what it shall eat on the morrow. It feels the brooding mother-love and does not worry. It cares not for the morrow, what it shall eat, or where it shall sleep. We must cultivate just that attitude toward the Lord.

Jesus said these words: "Take no heed of what ye shall eat or what ye shall put on. Take heed to the spirit. The lilies of the field they toil not, neither do they spin. But verily I say unto ye that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

And Krishna in closing Chapter of the Gita tells.

"Take refuge in me, O Arjuna.

Precious thou art to me, right well-beloved!

Listen, I tell thee for thy comfort this.

Give me thy heart! Adore me, serve me!

Cling in love and reverence to me!

So shalt thou come to me.

I Promise true,

For thou art dear to me.

Fly to me alone.

Make me thy single refuge. I will free  
thy soul from all its sins.

Be of good cheer!"

All training, meditations, right thinking and living are only preparations for this great self-surrender, this merging our personality in the Lord. This can be made easy if we first learn to love unselfishly some great ideal or being, *unselfishly*, meaning working, living for them, and having attained to this, we can, on dying, transfer that devotion to the Lord.

### SAINT RAMADAS

*By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, BA., B.L.*

It is well-known of all observant and unprejudiced observers of the never-ending play of social phenomena and students of sociology that every great race and every vital and enlightened civilisation, while functioning on various planes of activity—material, mental, moral, spiritual—and while trying to conquer new territories in the realms of artistic, industrial, political, and





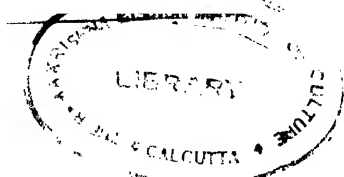
other manifold energy, regard a certain type of manhood as the very flower of its existence, the summation of its achievements, the crown of all its attainments. It is only recently that we are beginning to have a scientific apprehension of the truth of truths that a race is not a mere assemblage of human beings but is a quality, a temperament, a type, a way of self-realisation. Carlyle has well said: "The manner of men's hero-worship, verily, it is the innermost fact of their existence and determines all the rest."

Even in the west where activism is so dominant and political activity is the summum bonum of existence, there comes now and then the realisation that a merely material life is unsatisfying. Oman has said well: "After all, man's highest destiny is hardly realised by his being perpetually engaged in manufacturing things of various kinds, however useful in themselves, nor even in helping to distribute such productions, often with the aid of quickfiring guns, over the face of the inhabited globe."

In India, on the other hand, activism is not despised but is subordinated to contemplation and God-love and God-realisation. The best and most Indian minds will never be seen lost in mere externalities. They realise that society, like nature, is a means of realising God who is within and above both Society and Nature. Life is here an orderly and delightful and delighted procession towards the super-life—not a tumult or a battle or a drunken brawl. Hence it is that the supreme heroes of Indian life are not the warriors and the statesmen but the sages and the seers. Let no one think from this that the life of active service of society was unknown or despised in India. Our greatest saints have been also social leaders and statesmen in not a few instances. But they never lost their vision of the Beyond in mere short-sighted absorption in the present.

Ramdas was one of these great souls who loved men and God and who sought to lead man to God through service and devotion. He was not only a great saint of supreme realisation but also a great statesman who dreamt and built a glorious and self-contained and pure Indian polity.

The ancestors of Ramdas lived at Janib a village in the District of Satara. The father of Saint Ramdas was Suryaji Punt. Ramdas's mother was Ranoo Bai. Both were devout worshippers of Sri Rama and it was undoubtedly the devotion of that family





for generations that led to the birth of the great saint in that line. The elder brother of Ramdas was born in 1605. He was named Gangadhar at first, and then "Sreshtha" afterwards having been called by that name by Eknath Swami. He called himself Ramjee Ramdas in his compositions. Ramdas was born on 24th Chaitra 1608. He was named *Narayan* at birth and was afterwards called 'Ramdas' or 'Samarth.' Eknath Swami realised his greatness even in his childhood and predicted that he would be a great uplifting force in later life. He acquired knowledge with amazing rapidity and was invested with the holy thread in his fifth year. His father died in 1615. Samarth asked his brother to initiate him, but his brother asked him to wait. He then went to the temple of Hanuman and lay there in a passion of prayer till Hanuman appeared and showed him Sri Rama who Himself initiated his beloved devotee. The mission that the Lord gave to him was carried out by him in later life with unflinching vigour and tenacity and purity of purpose.

In his thirteenth year his aged mother pressed him to marry and enter upon the householder's state. Though he disliked marriage and once even tried to commit suicide by falling into a well to avoid it, he eventually obeyed his mother and agreed to marry. But on the day of marriage he fled from the marriage pandal because he felt a higher call which drew his heart away to nobler things. This was in 1621. He went straight from the marriage pandal to a cave in Nasik and began doing penance at Ekli. This life of absolute purity and austerity went on for twelve years. His body was transformed by his penance. There was a new light in his eyes and a new sweetness in his speech. His soul was made pure and perfect. It is stated that all this was due to his twelve year long meditation on the holy and auspicious Gayathri Mantra.

His life as narrated in the existing sketches seems to have abounded in many miracles performed by him with the grace of Sri Rama and the aid of the occult powers generated in him by his devout meditation. Once a woman whose husband died of consumption and who was about to commit *sati* fell at his feet as a last act of devotion before she ascended the funeral pyre. He blessed her and said that she would be blessed with eight sons,



She asked: "Is this blessing to take effect in this life or the next? My lord is dead." The saint then went with her to the funeral pyre and sprinkled water on the corpse when the dead man got up uttering "Ram, Rama" and fell at his feet.

Ramdas had as his first disciple Udhava. He left the latter to worship in a newly established temple of Maruthi at Takli and went on a long pilgrimage. He first went to Benares. When he went to worship Vivaswara, the Brahmins there would not allow him ingress. He then turned away from there and immediately afterwards it is said that the Linga disappeared. At the request of all he then returned and then the Linga reappeared and he worshipped it. He found that the Hanuman ghat at Benares had no image of Hanuman and he established an image there. He then went to Ayodhya and spent many days there. He then went to Gokula, Brindavan, and Mathura. Everywhere he initiated men in the sacred lore and founded monasteries. He then went to Dwarika and established a temple of Sri Rama there. From there he went to Suragar where he vanquished the followers of Nanak who prided themselves on their occult knowledge. He then went up the Himalayas and visited Kailash, Badri Narayan, and Mana Srovar. He then went to Jagannath and hence to Rameswar and Lanka. He then returned to Mahabharat having spent twelve years on his pilgrimage. He has told us in weighty and beautiful words about the supreme need of travel—especially travel on foot in the old manner—to enter into the lives of men and the very heart of things.

"This world full of various people and a tangle among them enlightens us on many points, it fills us with education and instructs us on many knotty and difficult problems.

We should always travel and visit new places, and acquaint ourselves with many countries.

Perform numerous penances, go on pilgrimages to holy places, acquire new powers by meditation and love."

He now began to devote himself to his life-work of rebuilding the national character by making religious reform the basic portion of all his work for the uplift of his fallen people. He says:



"Therefore there is nothing higher and holier than knowledge and hence it is important to acquire the knowledge of the self."

He knew that a conversion of the heart alone will secure a lasting reformation of life and aimed at achieving such a conversion. He wanted his people to take their resolute stand on Dharma. In 1648 he had a temple of Sri Rama built at Chafal. This shrine became very popular. He had *bhajana* parties and Purana expositions there and under his inspiration the temple worship and festivals were carried on a grand scale and with great fervour. He was always in the back ground and never allowed his personality to be obtrusive but made it a silent, sweet, and pervasive influence. The state officers of Maharaja Shivaji enrolled themselves as his disciples. It is said that he established two thousand monasteries of which seventy-two were prominent and were great centres of purity and power. It was at this time that he composed his "*Manache Shloka*" (Advice to the mind)? consisting of two hundred and fifty verses of four lines each. In the monasteries founded by him his disciples were to live a life of renunciation and go for alms to the neighbouring houses repeating verses from *Manache Shloka*. His *Dasabodha* is equally beautiful and powerful. In both of these works we find the eternal vitality and uplifting power of our *Sanatana Dharma* and *Brahma Vidya*. He has admirably shown the golden ladder leading unto salvation in his poem which says:

"First action (karma), through karma worship (*upa ana*), the worshipper attains knowledge (*gnana*); and *gnana* leads to salvation (*mukthi*).

'*Manache Shloka*' deals with the power of devotion and of meditation on the name of Sri Rama, the value of association with godly men, the need of harmony in thought, word and action, the importance of controlling the senses, the need for the love of all, the worthlessness of idle disputations, the need for a *Sadguru* (holy teacher), the uplifting power of Viveka (knowledge) and vairagya (renunciation), and the infinite beauty, grace and love of Sri Rama. *Dasabodha* was the work of many years and the last chapter of it is said to have been composed only a few days before his death.

Ramdas was not content with organising only the religious forces of his age and race. He had a luminous and complete





vision as to the entire needs of his time and his land. He combined practical, social and political uplift with his religious teachings. He says:

"We must carry our words into action and speak only when we do the thing spoken. Then and then alone will our words be honoured by the people."

To effect this great work he laid certain injunctions on his disciples. They were to be constantly moving from place to place. He orders them

"Make everybody approach you by your humble and loving conduct."

"Our life should be mingled with the lives of others. Our soul must mingle with their souls. We should study the welfare of their hearts."

He directed them to keep up the habit of self-examination and solitary meditation. He enjoined them to remember always that life is short and that we must hasten to attain the fruit of life, that they must see that their reputation was bright and untarnished, that they must love all and live a life of selflessness and renunciation and benevolence and peace, and that they must be earnest seekers after God. He says:

"We must be happy at the happiness of others and grieved at their grief. All human beings should be won over by sweet and truthful words."

In course of time the great religious leader and Shivaji the great political leader met and joined their energies for the uplift of India. This great event happened in 1649. Shivaji yearned to meet the saint and eventually met him in one of the caves of Chafal hills. He had *Kanakabhishekam* performed for his *guru*. Ramdas not only instructed his royal disciple in the path to bliss but advised him how to consolidate his power and build posts on new and sound methods to save his country from conquest and devastation. In his deep devotion to his master Shivaji gave his whole kingdom as a gift to him. Ramdas gave back the kingdom to Shivaji and asked him to do his duty by his motherland in love of man and fear of God.

Shivaji died in 1680 and Ramdas felt that the time had come for him also to quit the world. He completed his *Dasabodha* in 1687. He says of it: "Submitting myself to the holy injunctions



of Lord Sri Rama and for the sake of the happiness and perfection of the world, I have composed this work pouring into it the treasure of my experience acquired by long penance and austerities." His devotion to Sri Rama and his life-long work to spread the rule of holiness and love on earth bore perfect fruit on 9th February, 1682, when he rose from his mortal frame and attained the lotus feet of Sri Rama.

## WILL THE CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR COME?

*By Brahmachari Saswata Chailanya*

*The Avatara is always one and the same ; having plunged into the Ocean of Life the one God rises up at one point and is known as Krishna and when after another plunge He rises at another point He is known as Christ.*

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

When will the Christmas come?—not the traditional Christmas with its usual merriment, formal service, meeting and rejoicing of friends but the universal jubilation of all mankind as the result of peace and goodwill on earth, of spiritual life and illumination, of bliss and love, and service and sympathy. When will the New Year be ushered into being?—not the New Year which recurs with the rolling of the tide of time, but the New Year which brings with it new hope and life divine, heavenly blessings and power spiritual, which sees the descent of God and the restoration of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, which marks the passing away of a world of evil and injustice and the coming in of a world of divine peace and perfect self-abnegation. And when will be the birth of the Divine Babe of Mary?—not the celebration of that birth but the remanifestation of that spirit of meekness and wisdom, gentleness and perfection and the diffusion once again of the teachings of the great one of Galilee who had not a curse on His lips, not a frown on His face.

The usual Christmas will come and go, as it has come and gone many a time before, and so also the external rites and observances ; but what will abide with us all for ever, Christians and non-Christians alike ? Will it be what the Great Teacher left behind Him when He came and sacrificed Himself ? Will His more to more ? Knowledge of Him increase for



ever? Devotion to Him be intensified? As belonging to the dominion of man whose form He assumed, every man and every woman have a right to ask himself or herself, "Am I doing His work or undoing it? Am I helping or hindering it? Am I putting my shoulders to the wheel which he set rolling or putting a spoke in it? What is my present duty?" With deep and sincere introspection, everyone must take it to be his task to search within himself for the answer and do his utmost for furthering the cause for which He descended on earth, the cause of righteousness, of unselfishness and knowledge of the divine.

Progress can be either subjective or objective in the realm of the mind and the soul, or in the sphere of the external world of man and his surroundings, but the progress in the one is not entirely isolated from that in the other. So long as the subject exists, the object also does exist, and vice versa; for both are reflections of the same Spirit which transcends them both. The progress therefore made by the one is bound to hasten the progress of the other, and this is why even those who lead a life of self-chosen obscurity and utter humility of the soul act as potent forces on human society, influencing its ideas and moulding its opinions and guiding it along channels of usefulness. The saints and sages who lived in caves and desert places lived and died, but has not the ideal for which they lived and died and which they realised through strenuous effort come to be recognised? Did not the great Jesus who lived in communion with the 'Father in Heaven,' preached to the people the words of wisdom, and gave up his body with benediction on his lips for his ignorant persecutors, leave behind him a vast wave of spiritual power which has been rolling on the ocean of time for nearly twenty centuries and will still roll on?

The problem before the world to-day is the problem spiritual. After searching in vain for the ideal of happiness in the little pleasures of life, its enjoyments, its warmth, in possession and power, millions are now looking forward to the realisation of that ideal elsewhere in the realm of the soul, of the spirit, and the 'divine discontent' which will grow strong in them will spur them onward to find the real solace of life and seek its real *summum bonum*. The great religious and philosophical movements of the last century and their continuing to exist in the present are ample and eloquent testimony to corroborate the fact that the search of man is becoming



inward, his mind turned within, his activities planned and regulated on a right basis and his life lived with a purpose to be accomplished and with an aim to be realised. Surely, therefore, now is the time to vivify those ideas which are already in the fore and hasten the advent of all that is good and great and high and noble to illumine the path with

‘ that gleam divine

The light that was not on sea or land,

The consecration and the poet's dream.’

We must remember He Himself came to teach and guide the erring humanity, and will not the teachings of Him who appeared about two thousand years ago in Palestine help those who have a desire to do good to themselves, to live righteously and induce others to live righteously? What were the essential characteristics of His teachings which mark them as His own and distinguish them from those of others? He taught the Truth and there are different degrees of Truth intended to be grasped firstly by the unsophisticated and simple, secondly by the finer minds, and thirdly by the highest men. He therefore taught the first class of people a simple prayer called the Common Prayer, “Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name” and so on. This prayer was for the uneducated and is quite in keeping with the popular notion of God as a benevolent protector somewhere in the celestial abode far away from the abode of man. To the second and higher class of men Jesus imparted a higher instruction: “I am in my Father and ye in me and I in you” And to the most elevated minds the most thoughtful and advanced souls, he said, “I and my Father are one” thereby expressing the essential oneness of the human and the divine, of man and God. The same three stages of spiritual unfoldment can be discerned almost in all religions, especially in the Vedanta. They roughly represent the Dwaita, Visishtadwaita, and Advaita systems in Vedanta Philosophy. These three degrees of spiritual evolution represent the whole gamut of religious and mystic music and therefore the teachings of the Great One whose birth will be shortly celebrated throughout the world were suited to the needs of different minds and consequently universal.

Jesus therefore taught his men the great Truth in all its phases but did He show them the way of attaining It, realising It, and





becoming one with It? Yes, He did. The way, He said, was through *Renunciation*. This word is only an austere equivalent for the sweet word *love*. When love of man for an object or ideal fades away and love for another object or ideal gradually springs in his heart, he may be said to be *renouncing* the former. When a baby throws away a beautiful flower and clasps a fine toy in its turn, he *renounces* the former. And we, little babies playing on the vast shore of the ocean called existence go on playing with one sea-shell after another, running hither and thither for each in turn, until we remember we have left our sweet Home whence we came. Only through bitter experience does man learn that his ideal can be realised in the Infinite without form or its manifestation by its own Power in a form Divine. And Jesus preached the ideal of renunciation to a rich youngman who asked him: "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" The Great Teacher said: "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and take up thy cross and follow me"; for had the rich youngman's mind been entirely devoted to God, would he have desired for his wealth and possessions? It was the same Divine voice that said again and again "Whosoever shall save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it."

If the Lord of Galilee has then taught the Truth and the way of attaining It, what is the central core of His teaching? It consists in the practice of such divine qualities as unselfishness, meekness, humility, self-sacrifice, and perfect love. These are the qualities which adorn a great spiritual man and it will be difficult and well-nigh impossible for a person to practise them without living a genuinely spiritual life or a life of absorption in the Spirit. Not until he feels himself unified with God and transcends all the limitations of body and mind will he be able to act up to the precept of Jesus: "If anyone smite thee on thy right cheek, show thy left one also." Action begets reaction and ordinary persons cannot refrain from retaliation and much less its thought, on receiving an insult or injury. Whence does retaliation come? Certainly from the mind which reacts; and unless we root out this natural tendency of the mind and scorch it even in its seed form, we cannot succeed in refraining from retaliation. Entire selflessness and



absence of egoism are the very essentials required for such success. Harmlessness is undoubtedly difficult of practice, but it is higher than its opposite, for we are in essence one with the Spirit beyond all fear or injury. Reaction or retaliation has its own place in the scheme of nature, but it is not constructive nor is it always a potent instrument of success. The object of this teaching of the Great Master was to induce men to cultivate the virtue of selflessness and destroy the vice of egoism, and we know what a blessed day it will be when man will give up his idea of 'me' and 'mine' and thus set an example of humility for his fellow-men.

The necessity for the practice of the lesson of the Great Teacher is imperative in modern times. Those lessons have come down to us through a handful of men who gathered round Him and after His leaving His mortal coil lived the life He lived and taught the truths He taught. Won't it be possible for every man and every woman, Christian and non-Christian alike, to do something likewise in His name which will spread His ideals, first by silently practising His virtues and then inducing others to do the same. They should only purify their hearts of all lust and desires and other weaknesses and the wondrous energy and power which are His will work through them for their good and the good of the rest of mankind. Says one of the greatest religious teachers of modern times: "In a sense, you are all prophets; every one of you is a prophet, bearing the burden of the world on your shoulders. Have you ever seen a man, have you ever seen a woman, who is not quietly, patiently, bearing his or her little burden of life? The great prophets were giants, they bore a gigantic world on their shoulders. Compared with them, we are pygmies no doubt, yet we are doing the same task in our little circles, in our little homes, we are bearing our little crosses. There is no one so evil, no one so worthless, but he has to bear his cross. But with all our mistakes, with all our evil thoughts and evil deeds, there is a bright spot somewhere, there is still somewhere the golden thread through which we are always in touch with the divine." Yes this is true. Everyone is a prophet and can do his best, leaving the results to the Lord Himself. He can begin even from now - for "better late than never" - to follow in the footsteps of Him who reached the highest perfection and could say when He was being tortured on the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."



Will the world again see such a manifestation of perfection, meekness and universal love? Then will be the birth of the Divine Babe of Mary. Then will the Christmas come, and then shall we sing with the poet :

" This is the month, and this the happy morn,  
Wherein the Son of Heaven's eternal King,  
Of wedded Maid, and Virgin-mother born,  
Our great redemption from above did bring."

Then shall we shout with joy :

" Ring out wild bells to the wild sky,  
" Ring out the old and ring in the new."

And then shall we acclaim as one man :

Glory unto Jesus,  
Glory unto the Lord,  
Peace and good-will, hope and happiness,  
Light and love and life among mankind.

## REVIEWS.

*The Light of Ancient Persia*, by Mr. Maneck Pithawalla, B. A., B. Sc., published by The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India. Price Rs. 3 (Cloth), Rs. 2-8-0 (Board).

" Ancient Persia can be happily associated with the light of religion, science and art, which was kindled at a time when the modern 'civilised' countries were in darkness. That Light was cast from the heavenly heights through the prophet, Zoroaster." " Many rays of that Light streamed into other parts of the world, and an attempt has been made in this book to recover and unite them in order that we of the modern age may re-light our little lamps with the ancient Light." This is the aim which the Author has set to himself and one is pleased to note that the author has consistently worked towards the achievement of this aim. Within the small compass of 256 pages the book gives a concise and clear account of the history of Ancient Persia, of the wealth of thought that lies hidden in the Zend-Avesta, various aspects of ancient Persian Life, of Modern Science in ancient Persia and of the present outlook of the great race which inherits the Light of Ancient



Persia and to which the Author himself belongs. The book provides very interesting reading and besides other useful informations gives a new point of view from which the history of Greece, particularly that of the times of Alexander the Great, could be studied by Eastern students.

*The Coming Race*, by Nolini Kanto Gupta, published by The Arya Publishing House, College Street Market, Calcutta. Price Re. 1-4-0.

Writers of *Utopias* in Western countries have taken for their theme the perfection of material comforts and of civic institutions in so far as they help towards the attainment of the greatest 'material' welfare of the greatest number. Here, in this book, the author with true Eastern instinct has sought to construct society on a basis of spiritual perfection. The New Humanity, The Creative Soul, Rationalism, The Intuition of the Age, The Nietzschean Antichrist, Communism, The Basis of Social Reconstruction, A Theory of Yoga, The Parting of the Ways, Principle and Personality are the various captions under which the Author develops his thesis. The style of the Author is good and the book provides ample material for thought.

*The Need in Nationalism and other Essays* by Sri Aurobindo Ghose, published by Mr. S. Ganesan, Publisher, Triplicane, Madras, S. E., Price as. 8.

There is a resurgence of the soul of India in Nationalism. "But that resurgence is not yet complete. There is the sentiment of Indianism, there is not yet the knowledge. There is a vague idea, there is no definite conception or deep insight. We have yet to know ourselves, what we were, are and may be; what we did in the past and what we are capable of doing in the future; our history and our mission. This is the first and most important work, to discover and generalise this knowledge." *Brahmatej* is the thing we need most of all and first of all. In one sense, that means the pre-eminence of religion; but after all what the European means by religion is not *Brahmatej*; which is rather spirituality the force and energy of thought and action arising from communion with or self-surrender to that within us which rules the world. In that sense we shall use it. This force and energy can be directed to any purpose God desires for us; it is sufficient to knowledge, love or service; it is good for the liberation of an individual soul,





the building of a nation or the turning of a tool. It works from within, it works in the power of good, it works with super-human energy. The reawakening of that force in three hundred millions of men by the means which our past has placed in our hands -- that is our object." "The spiritual force within not only creates the future but creates the materials for the future. It is not limited to the existing materials either in their nature or in their quantity. It can transform bad material into good material, insufficient means into abundant means. It was a deep consciousness of this great truth that gave Mazzini the strength to create modern Italy." "The circumstances in India forbid the use of the same means as the Italians used. But the general psychological laws which govern nations in their rise, greatness, decline and resurgence are always the same. The freedom we seek in India may be different in its circumstances from Italian freedom, the means to be used are certainly different, but the principle is the same. The old patriotism of the nineteenth century in India was petty, unscrupulous, weak, full of insincerities, concealment, shufflings, concerned with small material interests, not with great ideals, though not averse to looking intellectually and from far-off at great objects. It had neither inspiration nor truth nor statesmanship. Nationalism has done part of the work of a Mazzini by awakening a great spiritual force in the country and giving the new generation great ideals, a wide horizon of hope and aspiration, an intense faith and energy." The above extracts from the first two essays, "The Need in Nationalism" and "The Power that Uplifts" would illustrate the simple, direct style of the Author and the extent to which he has succeeded in expressing high and lofty thoughts clearly and concisely. The problems which Modern India has to face and solve are many and the thinkers who shed light on them and help towards their solution deserve the highest gratitude of the nation. The broadcasting of true and clear national ideals helps the nation in its path of progress and the five essays in this little collection contribute their own share towards that end.

*The National Being: Some thoughts on an Irish Polity, by A. E., published by Mr. S. Ganesan, publisher, Triplicane, Madras, S. E., price Re. 1.*

The spiritual basis of civic and economic life forms the subject of this extremely thoughtful contribution. Analysing the



surface-realities of every day life, the Author goes behind them to the eternal spiritual verities on which they exist. Says the author, "I believe profoundly that men do not hold the ideas of liberty or solidarity which have moved them so powerfully, merely as phantasies which are pleasant to the soul or make ease for the body; but because, whether they struggle passionately for liberty or to achieve a solidarity, in working for these two ideals, which seem in conflict, they are divinely supported, in unison with the divine nature, and energies as real as those the scientist studies—as electricity, as magnetism, heat or light—do descend into the soul and reinforce it with elemental energy. We are here for the purposes of soul, and there can be no purpose in individualizing the soul if essential freedom is denied to it and there is only a destiny. Whatever essential freedom, the right of the spirit to choose its own heroes and its own ideals, is denied, nations rise in rebellion. But the spirit in man is wrought in a likeness to Deity, which is that harmony and unity of Being which upholds the universe; and by the very nature of the spirit, while it asserts its freedom, its impulses lead it to a harmony with all life, to a solidarity or brotherhood with it. All these ideals of freedom, of brotherhood, of power, of justice, of beauty, which have been at one time or another the fundamental idea in all civilizations, are heaven-born, and descended from the divine world, incarnating first in the highest mind, in each race, perceived by them and transmitted to their fellow-citizens; and it is the emergence or manifestation of one or other of these ideals in a group which is the beginning of a nation; and the more strongly the ideal is held the more powerful becomes the national being, because the synchronous vibration of many minds in harmony brings about almost unconsciously a psychic unity, a coalescing of the sub-conscious being of many. It is that inner unity which constitutes the national being." The publisher has done a great service in bringing out a cheap Indian edition of A. E.'s valuable book.

*The Sayings of Kabir, by Lala Karon Mal. M. A. price As. 6, published by Mr. S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras, S. E.*

In this small book the author has attempted to present before the readers a few selections from the sayings of Kabir in English for the benefit of the English-knowing public. Kabir's skill in compressing a world of sense in the short compass of a single



couplet, the mysticism that colours all his utterances, emerging as they all are from the heart of the poet saint, hallmarked by the stamp of the sincerity of his soul, the simplicity of his language, captivating the heart of all alike, the wealth of his ideas, the subtle, stately and musical tone and finish of everyone of them, had already cast a charm over all who could read the poet in the original, and these sayings, presented as they are to a wider audience, now through the English translation, cannot but inspire who read them with a lightened sense of the true responsibility of life. In short one who reads these teachings of this mediaeval weaver saint of India, comes out after the perusal a better *man*, his ideas chastened, and sentiment lifted.

The translator has selected from the voluminous teachings, one hundred and seventy-five apt and well chosen sayings. The reader would have been better served, had there been a classification of these sayings into different heads. There are a number of sayings that deal with renunciation; others on moral rules, many are purely mystic and highly poetic. There are some excellent teachings that give good advice for the spiritual aspirant.

*The Sayings of Tulsidas by Lala Kannoo Mal, M. A., price Rs. 8, published by S. Ganesan & Co., Triplicane, Madras.*

A companion volume to the Sayings of Kabir, is the Sayings of Tulsidas and Mr. Kannoo Mal has brought out this volume, with the same purpose to serve—to familiarise the teachings of Tulsidas amongst the English knowing population. The sayings given in this book are based on the *dohas* (couplets) that occur in the Ramayana and are generally such as can universally be applied. The translator has selected one hundred and thirty sayings and all of them are general moral exhortations. The writings of Tulsidas have become classic in their nature and reputation. What Kambar is to Tamil land, Tulsidas is to Northern India. Tulsidas was not only recognised as the father of Hindi literature, but his fame is also as a great devotee of Sri Ranchandra, who spent his life in the practice, preaching and realisation of the high truths of religion. Coming from the lips of such an advanced soul, his sayings bear the impress of his soul. We give below a few of these sayings in the language of the translator :



"If you want light within and without, place the glowing diamond of Lord's name as a lamp on the threshold of your tongue."

"Without trust, there is no faith or love, without faith, the Lord does not show His grace. Without His grace, there is no peace in the mind even in a dream."

"There is none so helpless and poor as myself, none so merciful and compassionate as thyself towards the helpless and the poor. Therefore O Lord, remove this poignant suffering of the world."

*Flowers at the Feet of the Lord or Essays, religious and philosophical*—By R.C.R., B.A., Published by Ramachandra Govind Riswadkar, B.A., 1418, Kasba Peth, Poona City. Price As. 12. This little book contains twelve essays on Life, Religion and the bearing of Religion on life. The style is simple and clear.

*The Aphorisms of Narada*, by Lala Kannoo Mal., M.A., published by Mr. S. Ganesan, publisher, Triplicane, Madras, S.E., price As. 8.

There is a good Introduction explaining the four-fold path of religion. This is followed by a section on Bhakti and Bhaktas, then follow some critical and exegetical notes on the Sutras and these are followed by a clear English translation of the Sutras.

*Yogic Sadhan*, Edited by The Uttara Yogi. The Arya Publishing House, College St. Market, Calcutta, has brought out a third edition of this book. Price As. 10.

*The Ceylon Chronicle* Published at the "Ceylon Chronicle" Press, No. 1 A. Main Street, Koddaimunai, Batticaloa, Annual subscription Rs. 5. We have received the first four issues of this new weekly from Ceylon. We wish it all success.

*Young India*—By Mahatma Gandhi. Published by Mr. S. Ganesan. Triplicane, Madras S. E. p. 1199. price Rs. 4. Bound in Khaddar.

Mr. S. Ganesan deserves the thanks of the public for the great service he has done in publishing at a reasonable price the invaluable writings of Mahatma Gandhi in *Young India* from the date of its first publication in Ahmedabad in 1919 to the date of his incarceration in 1922. This beautiful and well-arranged reprint of all the articles of this period, in one compre-





hensive volume, would be considered indispensable by all those who are desirous of seriously studying the views of the Mahatmaji and who could not avail themselves of the opportunity of closely following his writings in the pages of Young India.

Mahatma Gandhi's writings have passed beyond the pale of polemical politics and have come to stay permanently in the literature of the world. Far more than their practical value to India, at present, or hereafter, is their value to the world at large, embodying in them a philosophy of life and practical conduct elaborated by the experience of the life-time of a Soul which will undoubtedly rank in history as that of one of the world's greatest of men. The task of the editor was not an easy one. A considerable amount of labour and care has been brought to bear upon the task of sorting the articles and of grouping them under ten different heads, such as

- I. The Satyagraha Movement.
- II. Towards Non-Co-operation.
- III. The Principles of Non-Co-operation
- IV. The Programme of Non-Co-operation.
- V. The Non-Co-operation Campaign.
- VI. Miscellaneous.
- VII. Congress and Swaraj.
- VIII. Towards Civil Disobedience.
- IX. Arrest and Trial.
- X. Appendices.

The book also contains a brief sketch of the Non-Co-operation movement by Babu Rajendra Prasad of Patna, a staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi. Every page of this collection is full of human interest and reveals the calm superiority of Mahatma's steadied mind in the midst of almost unsurmountable difficulties, his utmost regard for truth, his passionate sympathy for the poor and the depressed, his uncompromising patriotism, above all his saintly character. We recommend this collection of Mahatma's writing to those of our readers who are interested in the problems that are engaging the minds of all patriotic Indians.

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Tithi Puja

The sixty-second birthday anniversary of Srimat Swami Vivekanandaji falls on the 28th January, 1924 ; the *Tithi Puja* will be observed on that day at all the centres of the Mission, in India and abroad. The following Sunday is fixed for the public celebration at the Madras Math.

### Srimat Swami Bodhanandaji

Our readers will be glad to learn that Swami Bodhanandaji, in charge of our New York centre in U. S. A., has returned to India for a short visit. He is a disciple of Swami Vivekananda and has been working in America for the last 18 years. He arrived at Bombay on the 10th December and was welcomed by Swami Viswanandaji and a large number of devotees at the pier. On the 13th the Western India Vivekananda Society gave him an address of welcome. Mr. M. R. Jayakar presided. Mr. K. Natarajan of the *Indian Social Reformer* and Mr. M. A. Narayana Iyengar spoke appreciatingly of the works of the Swami in America. Swami Bodhanandaji stayed at Bombay for eight days and delivered two lectures and held two conversation classes, well attended by appreciative audiences. The first lecture, on "The Law of Karma", came on the 14th, and was presided over by Mr. Jayakar. The second lecture on "The Religion of Today" was delivered next evening under the presidency of Mr. Natarajan. On the 16th the Swami held the two conversation classes, one in the morning at our Ashrama at Santa Cruz and the other in the evening at the Saraswat Colony at Gamdevi. Though the Swami's stay at Bombay was very short, yet whoever came in contact with him was deeply impressed by his intense spirituality, deep sincerity and courage of conviction, contemplativeness, sweetness of temper and unostentatiousness. He left for Calcutta on the 18th evening.

### Srimat Swami Sharvanandaji at Amalner

In response to an invitation from the Institute of Philosophy at Amalner, Swami Sharvanandaji went there on the 6th and had



to return on the 12th to welcome Swami Bodhanandaji. Consequently other engagements in Guzerat had to be cancelled. Though he stayed there barely five days, he delivered as many as six lectures, some of the subjects being, "A Synthetic Study of the different Schools of Indian Philosophy," "The Theory of Maya," "The Study of Reality," and "The Ethics of Vedanta." One of these lectures was delivered in Hindi.

At Bombay, Swami Sharvanandaji delivered a lecture in Hindi on "The Problem of Untouchability in the Modern Hindu Society," organised by the Rastriya Stri Mahasabha. The lecture was much appreciated and about 500 ladies attended it.

The Swami left Bombay on the 18th and arrived at Madras on the 20th.

#### **Sri Ramakrishna Seva Sangha**

Srimat Swami Saswatanandaji is conducting the religious classes of the above Sangha. The classes, attended by sincere and earnest college students are held regularly on Sundays at the Sri Ramakrishna Math hall.

#### **Relief Work at Vizagapatam**

A party of workers from Belur Math has gone to help in the relief of the distress caused by the recent cyclone at the Ganjam Vizag District.

#### **The passing away of a scholar patriot**

Aswini Kumar Dutt, scholar and patriot, who is known throughout India and whose book on "Bhakti Yoga" is widely read, passed away at Calcutta on the afternoon of the last Dipawali day. The character and personality of this great man have left a deep impression on the country. He had the fortune and privilege to come under the influence of the Prophet of Dakshinewar. The reminiscences of the Great Master he has left behind are well known to the Bengali reading public.

#### **Sri Satohidananda Sangha**

The Secretaries inform us that the second Universal Religious Conference will be held at the Hindu High School Hall, Triplicane during the last week of December.



**The Calcutta Vivekananda Society**

We have received the annual report of the Calcutta Vivekananda Society and note with pleasure the great progress which the Society has made. The following appeal which the Society makes for the Swami Vivekananda Memorial Hall and the proposed Society Building, would we are sure find a ready response :

Every year in the Annual reports we have called the attention of our members and friends to our long cherished hope of erecting in this city a building with a fairly large hall, which, while accommodating the growing spheres of its activities, may be regarded as a fitting memorial to the great Swami in whose memory the Society has been founded in the town of his nativity. To realise this long cherished hope and to remove this growingly felt want the nucleus of a building fund has been created with a collection of Rs. 1,335-5-0 from a few member and sympathisers and we have got the definite promises of Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 2,000 from two of our sympathising brothers.

It is estimated that not less than Rs. 50,000 will be required for erecting a suitable building in a prominent locality of Calcutta. Only a few members of the Society have responded to our appeal and we now ask those of us, who have not yet contributed to this fund, to come forward with their share of help in no time. More help is also necessary from those who have not loosened their purse strings adequately for such a good cause. We appeal also to our generous countrymen and the numerous admirers, followers and disciples of the great Swami to help us freely in this noble undertaking.

Kind contributions to this fund may be sent to the undersigned, or to the Treasurer, Sj. Rabindrkrishna Mitra, B. A., 19, Nilmani Mitter Street, Beadon Square P. O. Calcutta, which will be thankfully acknowledged.

**KIRAN CHUNDER DUTT,**

(Honry. Secretary, Vivekananda Society)

"Lakshmi Nibas",

1, Lakshmi Dutt Lane, Bagh Bazar, Calcutta.





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# Vedanta Kesari

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want. And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads, and believe that 'I am the Atman.' —Swami Vivekananda.

January, 1924.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE GREAT MASTER.

By Swami Saradananda

His Vedantic Sadhana

(continued)

Subsequently, on one auspicious day Tota asked the Master, to perform the *Shraddha* rite, as a preliminary to his initiation into *Sannyas*, in memory of his departed forefathers and offer them *Pindam*; further, as a finale to all the sacramental rites that a 'twice-born' should perform, he bade his would-be-disciple to offer *Pindam* to his own self as well. Since from the moment of his initiation into the life of *sannyas*, one has to abandon all desires relating to the 'three worlds,' and isolate himself absolutely from all relationship with them, the scriptures have enjoined one to offer himself his own *pindam* also at that time.

It was usual with the Master that whenever he would place himself under the guidance of a particular teacher, he would implicitly obey with great faith and devotion the words of that teacher, resigning himself absolutely to his care. So on this occasion too he followed strictly all the commands of Tota. Having finished all the preliminary rites, he remained fasting for the whole day in expectation of the auspicious moment when he would get the initiation.



His own little hut near the Panchavati was selected for the ceremony. Next, when the whole of the night passed away and the roseate hue of the dawn flushed the eastern horizon, on that sacred moment of *Brahmah Muhurta*, both the guru and the disciple came to the little hut. The holy sacrificial fire was lit on the altar and the stillness of Panchavati was broken by the sacred chant of those *mantras* which breathe out the spirit of renunciation of all that is material in man, in the assertion of all that is spiritually real and eternal in him. It is this *sannyas* institution handed down through generation to generation of Guru and Shishya that has preserved the spiritual eminence of India and imbued its culture with the spirit of renunciation, purity and self-denial and showed the path of Self-realisation to man for all ages and for all climes.

The Guru began to chant the *mantras* and the disciple repeated the same after him and while chanting the *mantras* poured libations into the sacrificial fire. First invocatory *mantras* were chanted:—“May I attain the Supreme Brahman, may I attain the Being whose nature is Supreme Bliss. May Brahman who is of the nature of transcendental, indivisible, unitary and blissful Substance, manifest in me. O! Supreme Soul, eternally existent with the supreme knowledge, among all the angels and human beings, of all Thy children, I am the most solicitous of Thy Grace; O Lord! the Great Destroyer of all evil dreams of the world, break all this terrible nightmare of duality of vision of mine; Supreme Soul, I sacrifice all the activities of my Prana to Thee, and restraining all my senses, may I fix my mind on Thee alone. O! Great Providence, destroy all my impurities that impede the realisation of the Truth and awaken in me the Knowledge of the Real. May the sun, the wind, the waters, the food grains, the vegetables and all other objects of the universe, being filled with the proper Light, under Thy command, help me to gain the knowledge of the Real. O! Brahman, of Supreme Power, it is Thy Being that is manifesting in various forms in this Universe. To Thee, in the form of this Fire I offer my libations that my mind and intellect may become purified and get power to attain the knowledge of the Real. May Thy Grace descend on me.”\*

Next the famous *Viraja Homa* sacrifice was commenced—

\* The gist of the three *uparna mantras*.





"May the five elements of earth, water, light, air and ether, constituting this body of mine, be purified. By this libation may I be free from all impurities and sin—*Svaha*."

"May my *prana*, *apana*, *samana*, *udana* and *vyana* become purified. By this libation may I be free from all impurities and sin—*Svaha*."

"May my five sheaths of *annamaya*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, *vignanamaya* and *anandamaya* be purified. By this libation may I be free from all impurities and sin—*Svaha*."

"May the five sense objects of sound, touch, form, taste and smell and their cognitive impressions on my mind be purified. By this libation may I be free from all impurities, and sin—*Svaha*."

"May my mind, speech, body and actions be purified. By this libation may I be free from all impurities and sin—*Svaha*."

"O! Being of red eyes, reposing in the body of the me, awake; O! Thou dexterous in removing all obstacles of knowledge, remove all obstacles of mine, and make me *Trata*, spoken to me by the Guru, manifest in my heart in full splendour. May all that are in me be purified. By this libation, may I be free from all impurities and sin—*Svaha*."

"I am but an expression of the Pure Intelligence of Brahman and hereby I renounce and sacrifice all desire for wife, progeny, prosperity, worldly taint and heavenly enjoyments. By this libation may I be free from all impurities and sin—*Svaha*."

Then, after similar offerings with such mantras the disciple had to utter the famous *Presha mantra* with which he had to take the solemn vow of renunciation of all the worlds with their contents. The *homa* concluded with the benediction that 'nought but Peace and Blessings to all beings would proceed thereafter from him.' Next, his *sikha* and the sacred thread were thrown into the fire, and the disciple had to give up his former costume and accept the *koupina* and the holy ochre coloured garb from the Guru, according to the time-honoured custom of the institutional *sannyas*.

He must have got a new name also at that time from his Guru.\*

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\* It is believed by some that the name 'Rama-Krishna' was given to the Master by Tata Puri at the time of the *sannyas* initiation. Others hold that it was given to him by his uncle, Mathura Nath. But we think that the first view is most probable.



## NOTES OF THE MONTH.

The Hindu conception of *Dharma* makes it perfectly clear that society is based upon certain immutable and eternal verities of existence and that loyalty to God and humanity consists in the readiness to forsake all for the sake of upholding the dictates of Truth. In the Hindu Shastras, there is practically no dividing line between civic and moral law, both are comprised in the single

term *Dharma*. In ancient Hindu polity there was no talk of the "greatest good of the greatest number."

THE GOLDEN RULE OF CIVIC LIFE For, the self-existent, immutable *Dharma* laid down

such rules of conduct as would tend to lead one and all to the attainment of the highest good. The laws of the Sanatana *Dharma* were not man-made, they were seen and revealed by perfect men and thus they stand for all time and work for the good of one and all. Looking abroad at the foundations of other societies we find that they are built upon something of the nature of a contract. They profess to stand for the greatest good of the greatest number. But, within this professed aim there lies a confession of weakness, for, undoubtedly it were better if a community is built upon such principles as would be conducive to the highest good of *all* the individuals comprising it. Nevertheless, it is not quite so bad if a State is run on such lines as to secure the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of its citizens. But unfortunately this vaunted aim of European state-organizations appears to be nothing more than a lip-profession. It may be that these organizations, by creating representative machinery and such like things are steadily progressing towards the realization of their professed aim; but past and recent events point out that they are far from reaching it. Throughout their long history the emasculated millions of Europe seem to have been groaning under some form of tyranny or other. The French revolution of the last century, the Russian revolution of our times, the plebeian revolts of ancient Rome and such like records of history relate the trials and tribulations through which millions had to pass, to come to what, in truth, was their own. The hand that produced the food had the least share in the work of distribution. What to speak of the greatest good, the smallest of small favours had to be sought for, solicited or



forcibly wrested from the unwilling hands of self-interested men who paraded under the guise of guardians of society. The clergy, the nobility and now in our own times men who have accumulated some money, by fair or foul means, have successively played the role of guardianship. Theocratic and aristocratic tyranny had many redeeming features, but the present tyranny of gold is the ugliest of all. The golden rule of civic life which stood for equality, fraternity and liberty seems to have fled from the shores of those countries where the heartless, unrelenting rule of gold prevails.

Nevertheless, the outlook is not so black as it might have been. For, Europe appears to have set about to put her house in order. Great changes are taking place in the composition and ideals of her governing councils and legislatures. Old institutions are in the melting-pot. It is, of course, too early to prophecy what exactly the new order would be. Nevertheless, signs are not wanting to show that the age that is dawning would be an era of hope  
 TOLERATION  
 AND for the workers of the world. The recent general  
 TUTELAGE elections to the British parliament have shown that Labour has become a power to reckon with. The great trade congresses and workers' federations seem to have realised that the saving of the world from future wars largely depends upon the wresting of political power from the hands of those who were erstwhile using it for the promotion of their own selfish ends; and this realisation has opened the eyes of the emasculated millions of Europe and has led them to come forward and claim their rightful place in the councils that shape their destinies. Hitherto they had little or no voice in the management of their own affairs. They were under the wardship of a more or less exclusive caste of guardians who professed to carry on the affairs of the state in a manner conducive to the promotion of the common weal. The Great War and the untold miseries and privations of the working classes have demonstrated to them the utter futility of remaining under perpetual tutelage. For, it often happens that as time passes the guardian becomes more and more conscious of his own importance and consequently loses sight of the interests of his ward. Any sign of self-help on the part of the latter raises the suspicion of the former and drives him to take desperate measures. If you were to question the guardian, why he was still clinging to his post when it was time for him to retire, he would invariably reply to you to the



effect that things would go wrong, if he were to relinquish his post. Protectors are almost always obsessed with a certain amount of ego-centricity. They may not be deceiving themselves but they often make honest attempts to deceive the world by proclaiming themselves to be the props on which society rests. The old fable relates how the wolf was shedding pious tears when it saw the poor lamb getting wet in the rain. All protectors are not wolves but their conduct often smacks of bad faith when they lose their heads and set about in the most reactionary manner to suppress freedom of thought and association. Little do they realise that the fight for freedom when it once begins can never be suppressed. Repression might just help to make the fight keener by exposing the hollowness of specious promises and reaffirming the need for self-reliance. The masses of Europe have realised the necessity for taking their destiny into their own hands. The political power that rested in the hands of the privileged classes would henceforth filter down to the masses of the people. None can fully gauge the far-reaching benefits of this change. Men whose vision is dimmed by self-interest may refuse to acknowledge the wisdom of accelerating the progress of this wholesome change. Such as these are panic-stricken at the growing power of Labour. When Europe was freeing itself from the shackles of feudalism, many a well-meaning wolf shed pious tears for the impending fate of the working-classes. It was the same at the time of the abolition of slavery. Now it is the same, when the ideal of universal suffrage is being steadily realised. The people are coming to their own. It is time for the guardians to face the naked facts and forthwith put an end to their tutelage. There is a grace in yielding in time and thereby earning the gratitude of millions. The age that is dawning augurs to be an age of toleration and mutual understanding. Old bickerings and jealousies would cease to be when the people come to their own, for the erstwhile guardians would soon realise the wisdom of placating the opinion of the many; and the people on their part would realise that narrow nationalisms and the spirit of jingoism have been the cause of the decline and fall of great empires and that honest dealing is after all the very best foreign policy.

We in India, have for the past few decades copied the institutions of the West. It is needless to say that we have





assimilated much that is good and it is equally true that we have taken up the attendant evils as well. Inheriting the political principles of Rome, the Western countries have developed systems of high centralization of power. On the face of it, a system of centraliza-

tion may appear to be a source of strength; but it is good for us to remember that the strength as well as the weakness of Western countries lie in this heritage which Rome has left to them. Small self-contained units such as the smaller city-states of Greece provide the citizens with all that is needed for their intellectual and spiritual development; and as a matter of fact, what more is needed? On the other hand what true greatness is there in a state of mighty size, the crowded factories of which shut out heaven's own light and desecrate the simple woodland scenery, the beautiful meeting place wherein the yearning soul could retire to commune with her Lord? Size never matters, except when the occasion arises to meet a troublesome neighbouring state which unjustly marches in for predatory purposes. But is it not true that a country which is rich in intellectual and spiritual treasures and which limits its worldly possessions, say to the extent of a small plot of ground and a spinning wheel to each citizen, has nothing to fear from predatory neighbours? Armaments are needed to protect commerce, commerce should be carried on for acquiring wealth, and money is needed for the maintaining of armaments, and thus these three factors of modern civilization, run on in a vicious circle. It may be argued to the effect that educational and even religious work cannot be carried on without the aid of large sums of money. Our expensive colleges and schools do, indeed, bear testimony in favour of such an argument; but it should be remembered that these schools and colleges are the products of a system of centralization. India has not forgotten her simpler and more efficient Gurukula system and her Sanyasin teachers who brought the highest wisdom to the door of everyone for no more return than a morsel of food and a rag of cloth. Centralization cannot and will not succeed in India; the great-souled patriot who has roused up the masses of this country by his gospel of love and of strength through suffering has carefully analysed the existing conditions and has come to the conclusion that the seven lacs of villages of India should be organised as self-sufficient units, at any rate, as regards



food and clothing, the primal necessities of life.

Speaking of the evils of centralization we are also reminded of the spirit of intolerance that often comes to view in some of our national organizations which have copied the forms of similar organizations in the West. We are so obsessed with the idea of the rule of the majority that we deter and hinder a well-meaning minority from acting according to its own lights. We seem to

forget for the moment that the representative machinery which was invented for the purpose of checking possible excesses of individual self-interest is not exactly applicable to our national organizations, which

THE  
BASIS OF  
DEMOCRACY.

ought to maintain their solidarity by the discipline of self-denial. Toleration is indeed the first step in the ladder of non-violence and it also forms the basis of democracy. Ages ago, our people realised the necessity for religious toleration with what wonderful results, we need not recount. The present age calls for social and political toleration. How much better would it be to conserve the energy which various sections of our people, now fritter away in unnecessary squabbles and abuses. The goal is well-defined, what harm is there if my brother proposes to reach it by a path different from the one which I propose to take?

The principle of self-determination when carried to its complete logical conclusions would end in the ideals of toleration and decentralization of power. If I claim the right to determine the course of my future, I should be ready to concede the same right to my brother. Would not such a course put an end to all co-operative effort? By no means, for voluntary co-operation would

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continue to be. Men who till the soil to produce their own food and spin and weave their own clothing would voluntarily combine together to erect a temple to the Almighty. Such a temple may not, perhaps, be as imposing as the pyramids of Pharaoh, but nevertheless it would be a work of art and a constant source of pure joy. Whereas the pyramid would cease to have any beauty, the moment we come to realise that it was built by slave-labour under the compulsion of a tyrant. Money is the Pharaoh of our times and the pyramid-like factories which rise up under its order are standing monuments to the degradation of the human soul which has lost its sense of beauty, being obsessed with



a sense of magnitude. Centralization has brought about the bondage of the spirit. What benefits would democratic forms of government offer, if the citizen is hopelessly bound? Thus it becomes evident that if "democracy," "self-determination" and such things are to become real principles of life and not empty shibboleths, the emancipation of the spirit should be first sought for. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

### ISVARA AND HUMAN FREEDOM.

*By Prof. K. Sundara Rama Iyer, M.A.*

Modern Science proclaims the universality of the law of causation,—viz., the principle that every effect or event happening in the world must be connected with an invariable and antecedent phenomenon or group of phenomena known as cause. The connection is conceived as a natural and objective one, and not simply as one analogous to that existing in logic between the antecedent premises and the conclusion drawn from them by an inevitable law or process of thought. Should we accept such a real, objective, and necessary uniformity of connection? Does it exist as an undeniable fact? Is it true both of the chain of events occurring in the external world, and of the volitions and impulses which arise in the human mind? Does its acceptance destroy and disprove the alleged equally universal experience of, and faith in, the freedom of the human will and, thereby, man's sense of moral responsibility both for his actions as a member of society and for the achievement of his own spiritual progress and perfection? Finally, is the acceptance of the freedom of the human will opposed to the doctrine of Isvara's omniscience and omnipotence?

We shall here deal with the problem from a purely rational point of view. In the world of not-self present to our sense-perceptions, we have clearly no experience of events happening without their appropriate causes. The same is also true of our experiences of the subjective world, in so far as they are the result of inherent tendencies (or *Vasanas*) which we bring with us from previous births and which ripen in time for the giving of their proper fruits. These tendencies (or impulses) result in various



forms of activity unless counteracted by other impulses which act in a contrary direction or are even so strong as to suppress them altogether. In both these cases, the action of the law of causation is clearly discernible and unquestionable. But over and above these aspects of our experience, we have to consider the self of man as a living entity (or person) present in all our subjective states and experiences, and existing, too, as something different from a bundle or succession of such states and experiences, which stand towards each other in a uniform and necessary relation of cause and effect. The self exists as a datum of consciousness,—as a common subjective factor and substratum in our perceptions and experiences of all kinds. As Sri Sankaracharya says: “Whoso denies it, proclaims thereby that it exists as his own self”. No one ever doubts that he exists as a person (or inner self) distinct and apart from all the experiences which belong to him. This person or self cannot be explained away as a mere *sense-presentation*,—for even in sense-presentation it is present as the subjective factor determining the possibility and distinctiveness of an “existent” beyond itself portraying the object outside. Nor does such person or self originate in a mere *association* of sense-presentations, for such association is itself due to its inherent power of recognising and uniting them into a coherent whole. The self is to us a reality relating itself to its experiences, inner and outer, and so it cannot be identified with them. It alone interprets those experiences truly and relates itself to them and to the worlds, inner and outer, from which they flow. The question for consideration is,—whether this self has its own *free and self-determined* experiences apart from (a) the perceptions resulting from the causal succession of events taking place in the outer world; and from (b) the experiences resulting from the organic tendencies and impulses which are impressed on the mind as the effects of our past activities and expressed in this life or previous lives of ours.

The science of today does not deny the existence of this self, but explains it,—not, indeed, as a mere fortuitous concourse of atoms,—only as a centre or meeting-place of sensations, feelings and experiences of all kinds and associated together according to unvarying laws so as to form a personality determining its own fate in relation to its environment. Huxley, Haeckel, and others





have taught that it is only within recent years that man's place in nature and his relations to other men and animals have been discovered by Darwin, and that the latter's doctrine of descent confirmed by the facts of embryology and physiology, have destroyed the dogmas of all religions and shown them up as built upon mere illusions. The structural distance between the gorilla and the chimpanzee is less than that which separates the latter from the lower apes. It is also said that "man closely resembles the most man-like apes, only his structure is more complex; and certain of his bodily organs are more highly and delicately differentiated." Among these organs of finer structure may be mentioned the hand, the tongue, and especially the brain and nerves. Furthermore, man is characterised by his capacity for self-sacrifice, sympathy, and sociality. All these qualities and powers in him are capable of being utilised both for good and evil, but the pressure of the environment has compelled him to utilise them for progress in civilisation; and good has on the whole predominated over evil in the world, even though human nature, individual or social, is still—and may ever be—as far from perfection as ever, owing to the struggle for existence entailed by all such advances. Man's nature—his entire constitution, bodily and mental—and its expression of all kinds, whether as thought, feeling, emotion, volition, or action, is determined in accordance with the law of causation. Each man has his own self thus slowly developed in the course of the past history of the world,—and the differences among the individuals composing any society are so great that they defy all explanation and even definition. Hence, philosophers like Herbert Spencer, are prepared to express their assurance that there is "a power behind humanity and things" which has been working in the direction of the advance so far achieved. Huxley has also assured us that the same power works behind nature and in man, and that it is to that power that we owe the ethical progress which has been achieved in the world in defiance of the cosmic law of necessity. Some scientific men even go further, and admit their belief in the possibility of an Absolute Being guiding the activities of man and the course of the Universe towards the achievement of a destiny, or even a *final purpose*,—but these men stand apart from their class who generally deny all final causes and the guidance of an Absolute



Being, or Divine Personality, in any sense that can be intelligently comprehended by finite beings like ourselves.

According to the faith of the man of science above sketched, man's subjective life is as much determined by the law of causation as the course of the natural and material phenomena which form his environment outside. Hence his will cannot be said to be free in the sense that it is extraneous, or additional, to his life of experience as determined by his place in nature and his progress in the course of material and mechanical evolution in a world of automata. Further, it is said that such a freedom of the human will in the sense either of an efficient or self-determining cause, or in that of a purpose, ethical or spiritual, directing the energies of an intelligent or conscious personality, is difficult to reconcile with the fore-knowledge inseparable from the omniscience of a Divine Being. On the other hand, we find that it is those who believe in an omniscient and omnipotent Creator that insist on postulating the doctrine or faculty of human free-will on the ground that to deny it would amount to denying all moral order in society and moral responsibility among men.

The truth is that, in the West, the ontological doctrine of free-will or self-determination and the scientific doctrine according to which the human will is determined to activity by invariable laws of causation are generally accepted as irreconcilable. The doctrine of freedom presupposes an efficient personality born with the faculty of volitional activity. Human activity also implies a purpose. The mere succession of cause and effect cannot be necessarily taken as implying such a purpose. Further the scientific theory of determinism only proclaims that volitional activities are caused by motives. If motives are free and uncaused, the question of freedom is only transferred to an earlier stage in the chain of causation. Personality and free-will now apply to motives, not to volitions. Moreover, both motives and volitions arise only in connection with the purposive activity of a self-determining person, endowed with the power of initiative and the architect of his own future fate.

Is then the indeterminist's position established as the only one consistent with human dignity, or even, with our knowledge of the phenomena of human nature? Indian thought decisively answers in the negative. For, it regards the human personality as a permanent and everlasting entity, clothing itself with a succession of bodies



and passing from death to life and life to death in accordance with such of its unexhausted Karmas as can combine together. Each living man brings with him these Karmas in the form of *Vasanas* or latent tendencies inborn with him, and as they rise into manifestation they lead to suitable activities in the external world. Thus the universality of the law of causation is accepted, while man's freedom is not sacrificed. For his present Karma-Vasanas are the result of his own previous Karmas freely chosen in lives already passed.

Isvara has not left man without guidance in order to enable him to reach the perfection of his Self which is the one noumenal Reality and whose true nature is the Innermost Bliss of Love, beyond all the transient states of pleasure and pain in the world of phenomena. He has proclaimed the distinction between Dharma and Adharma through his revelations to the perfected sages; and progress in Dharma in life after life leads to the ultimate perfection of the human personality and its constant realisation of its true nature as *Ananda* (Joy). Adharma, on the contrary, brings degeneracy and downfall. Thus the doctrine of Karma offers the one possible means of escape from the difficulties of the long-standing controversy regarding Free-Will and Necessity.

We shall now proceed to deal with various questions arising out of this Indian solution of the problem. First, we have the point already mentioned, viz., God's foreknowledge of the future course of the universe. This difficulty is easily removed. For, human effort is only regarded as removing the impediments to the manifestation of the pre-determined evolution of the universe in accordance with Karma, which is present to God's omniscience. Just as the potential forms of the various articles of clay produced one after another exist previously in the potter's mind, so also the entire course of events forming the future of the universe exists in the divine mind. Also, even as the forms of those articles already exist in the mass of clay with which the potter has to deal, and only become manifested when he has gone through the physical and mechanical operations which are needed, so the successive phenomena of the evolution of the universe forming the divine plan are already present in the material universe, though hidden, in their true forms. The Jiva, by his activities and efforts, only removes the veils of matter which overlay them and discovers them to our



**gaze.** The Divine Architect of the universe has a fore-knowledge of the future in the same way as a Consulting Architect has a fore-knowledge of the house he plans and draws before it is actually constructed by the workmen he employs.

*Secondly*, Kant holds that we take upon ourselves the burden of obeying the moral imperative, and hence freedom is a primary and self-evident datum of our consciousness. Freedom and the moral law are, in fact, but different aspects of one and the same phenomenon. "Thou canst, because thou oughtst." But this explanation forgets the fact that all men do not accept the moral imperativeness or the self-evidence of the law of duty, nor are even prepared to regard it as imposed by any sanction, divine or human. Hence the alleged mutual implication of freedom and morality, or even the dependence of the one upon the other, cannot be allowed to be true for all. Experience shows that, whatever the source of the moral imperative, unless there is an impulse in us to recognise its urgency and value, we do not feel free to act, we even scorn its source, and reject its claims, and rebel against its sanctions.

*Thirdly*, how does this inherent impulse, organised in man and which he brings with him become manifested in him leading him to action, ethical or unethical? The human personality is neither a mechanical adaptation of elements derived from material nature, nor a merely sensitive centre responding to its environment nor even a mere focus of vital energies passing through regular stages of growth and decline,—but a conscious entity which, while it cannot escape or avoid what has been called "the sculpturing process of natural selection, is endowed with tendencies and impulses which, while themselves developed as the results of antecedent causes, act in their own turn, when the circumstances are favourable, as effective causal aids to the practical and purposive guidance of its own future evolution.

What, then, is the human self, as it has evolved through a succession of lives passed amid countless and varying environments and influences? It is a self-determined focus and centre of personality, having energies and capacities fit to enable it to achieve its own perfection, and in its essential nature free from all the chains of circumstance, past and present. Its liberation from the bondage of matter and its perfect self-realisation can be achieved when it obeys the commands of its divine source and author. At the same time,





it is a mistake to suppose that it is a mere conduit for the flow of inspiration from the perfect and gracious personality of God. Though God is the fountain-source of its very existence as an independent centre of vitality, activity, and thought, he has permitted it to build up its own personality according to its own chosen lines of karmic evolution. Had its inner evolution been in unquestioning accordance with the divine will and the precepts of Dharma,—had the human mind never allowed itself to follow independent lines of evolution, the revelation of God in man would for one and all of us be a reality, and would not merely be viewed as a logician's dialectical extravagance or a Vedic poet's waking dream.

## ARGUMENTS AGAINST ATHEISM

*(An imaginary conversation.)*

By Swami Ramakrishnananda

One summer morning I was sitting self-absorbed under a tree on the bank of the beautiful river that threads its silvery way along the eastern skirt of our little town. The place was full of peace, and there was a calm in the atmosphere that led me unconsciously into meditation. I had sat there some time when I was startled by a keen-looking young man asking me whether he could have a conversation with me. I had not seen him approach; but evidently my monastic garb had attracted his notice.

"Please excuse me," he said, "for encroaching upon your solitude. But certain deep thoughts are tormenting the peace of my soul, I think you can help me a little."

I welcomed him, saying, "Please be seated. May I know what is troubling you?"

"I am an atheist," he replied. I could not help laughing at the way, he gave out the last word. "It is a very big word for a man to utter," I said, "Do you know what all it implies?"

He said, "By what I said, I simply meant that I find no grounds for continuing to believe in the Divine Existence. Please do not take my words as empty bravadoes. I come from a very devout Vaishnava family, and had been nurtured from my early age in the traditions of Divine Mercy, love and goodness. But as



I grew in knowledge these ideas vanished away like mist before the sun. I even now wish I could get back the unsophisticated days of my childhood. But, sir, what my heart desires, my intellect denies. The vision of sunny boyhood is now lost in the clouds of scepticism. I cannot find solace in a faith which is not upheld by reason, and the more I study and think, the stronger grows the conviction in me that the existence of God is a pure myth, a creation of the belogged intelligence of the uninformed masses."

The confession of the young man touched my soul with its sincerity and pathos. He was indeed suffering. I said, "There is God,—God does exist.—How far have you studied?" He replied, "I am a Master of Science—How do you prove the existence of God? What is your definition of God?" To which I said, "You are a student of Science, do you believe in the reality of an energy working in the world, in gross and subtle ways, and that your body is resisted and controlled by that energy?" "Yes, I believe in the existence of such energy, but it is dead, unintelligent;" was the reply. I asked him, "Do you not feel that your mind cannot always act in the way you wish it to act, that there too a power is resisting its free course?" He admitted the truth of my question. I continued, "I define God as the Power Supreme, working in and through, and sustaining and controlling all that exist, and perceived by man as an insurmountable resisting and driving Power\*."

The young man looked a little surprised at my definition. He said, "I confess this is quite an original way of defining God,—I mean, God as resisting Power. But I fear I cannot accept it. I admit I feel a power working in and through my mind and body, which undoubtedly is not under my control. But I am resisted by powers not within myself alone; there are powers visible and invisible which, I find, are always obstructing me. Say, my parents and superiors, they do often resist my desires. Are they therefore God? Are society and government God because they resist? There are many who eclipse me by their superior intelligence and power, are they also God? How absurd! Again, I don't see how this your definition agrees with the popular idea of God that He is all mercy, love and goodness. Your definition posits him only as a force, blind, cruel, mechanical, purposeless and insentient."

\* How the latter portion of this definition reminds one of Thompson's Hound of Heaven—Ed.



My young friend was going on enthusiastically. I calmed him, saying, "Peace, my friend! What leads you to think that that Power is purposeless and mechanical?"

He burst out: "Why, the unnumbered deaths on earth, the untold sufferings of men. Do the miseries of life require to be counted? Is not every life a direct denial of a kind and good God? Blindness, poverty, helplessness, disease, death, these are but few of man's lot, thwarting his happiness at every step. How hideous your God must be, to be a combination of all these! And what purpose does he serve by subjecting man to all these thousand ills?"

I replied, "From what you said, I understand that you have brought two charges against my definition. First, if whatever resists one is God, then one's parents and superiors, society, government, and death and disease and all sufferings are God, secondly, that this resisting Power is purposeless and blind and as such to call It God would be misnomer. My friend, in spite of this two-fold accusations, I still stick to my definition, your arguments are vitiated by one miscalculation.—Why do you take the resisting Power piecemeal and not in entirety? You remind me of a beautiful parable often told by my Master. Just listen.

Four blind men went out to know an elephant. One touched the leg of the elephant and said, "The elephant is like a pillar." The second touched the trunk and said, "The elephant is like a thick club." The third touched the belly and said, "The elephant is like a big jar." The fourth touched the ear and said, "The elephant is like a big winnowing basket." Thus they began to dispute about it amongst themselves. A passer-by, seeing them thus quarrelling, said, "What is it you are disputing about?" They told him everything regarding their perception of the elephant, and asked him to arbitrate among them. The man said, "None of you has seen the elephant. The elephant is not like a pillar, its legs are like pillars. It is not like a winnowing basket, its ears are like winnowing baskets. It is not like a stout club, its proboscis is like a club. The elephant is the combination of all these, of its legs, ears, belly and trunk." Do you understand the point of the parable? Yes, God is all those hideous and cruel things that you mentioned; but they are cruel and hideous and also meaningless, when you take them separately and piecemeal; taken as a whole they become beautiful, good and meaningful.



It is as absurd to describe God as the combination of blindness, poverty, and helplessness, as it is absurd to describe an elephant as a thick club. Because your parents and superiors resist your desire in many instances, they are therefore not the whole of God, because society and government resist you similarly therefore they are not God in themselves, because another man more powerful, more intelligent, more learned resists you he is not God on that account. God is the whole resisting Power taken in its entirety."

"But" rejoined the other, "When we look at an elephant we do not always look upon the whole of its body. We sometimes look at its trunk, sometimes look at its ears, and compare them with other things of similar nature; do we not? Similarly we have full right to look at the different phases of this God of yours and pass our judgments on those phases. This being granted, when we see a widow is deprived of her only child, and cast helplessly into the world to writhe herself in the extreme agony of bereavement, is that not very cruel of that power which you call God, and should we serve such a cruel Master?"

"Will or nill you are bound to serve inasmuch as you are completely under its control, for you cannot deny the resistance which you get from all sides. But this power appears to you to be cruel when you look upon only one side of it forgetting its other sides of which this side is a connecting link. As when you simply look upon a portion of the ear of the elephant, it appears to you to be very ugly, but seen with the whole body, there is no such ugliness. The parents sometime whip their children. Whipping itself is very ugly, but when we consider the motive of the parents we cannot but praise it. Government hangs a culprit. Now hanging is very nasty and cruel. But the fellow hanged, has lately butchered his wife and children. When you know this, does his hanging appear to you to be nasty and cruel at all? So you see what appears to be apparently cruel, may really be not so if you dive deep into the matter."

"But in the cases you have cited" answered my friend "The children are wicked and the man is a culprit. As for the widow I am speaking if she is generally reputed to be a very pious woman. Is the sorrow for the loss of her child the fruit of her piety?"

"No, certainly not. That is the fruit of her ignorance, and





want of piety. If her devotion and love towards her God were greater than that towards her child, then she could not feel the bereavement at all, but on the contrary she would be rather grateful to her Lord for removing her bondage and impediment. But as that Almighty Power does not like that the pious woman should be in the darkness of ignorance, It has taken away the child which virtually belongs to It, for through Its influence alone the child came into existence, to Its own side. It is through mistake we call our own what really is not our own. So in order to dispel that mistake It has taken away the child from the widow. She may weep for a few days, but after that period she will find consolation in herself, knowing it for certain, that the child was not hers but God's and that there is nothing else permanent save God, and so if she places her love in God there is no fear of further bereavement, whereas if it be placed in things other than God, there is every chance of separation."

At this the other cried out "What! children are impediments in the path of virtue! Those sweet innocent cherubs that make this otherwise miserable world an abode of happiness and joy to all men,—are they to be considered as barriers on our way? They rather serve to give us life and vigour in our tedious journeys through the world."

"No, no they are not barriers, so long as they do not occupy that place in our heart which we should allot to that Power we call God that being Eternal and Great,—greatest of all existing things, for, by definition everything is under the control of God. As the maidservant of a wealthy man nurses the children of her master, and acts as a second mother to them, chastising them if they do anything wrong, coaxing and caressing them to sleep, and doing sundry other motherly services to them, but all the while knowing that the children are not hers but her master's; so if a man or a woman can look upon his or her children as the children of God and that he or she is simply a servant employed by God for their sake, then there can be no bondage. All things will go on smoothly." This was my reply.

The other asked "But then why should your God create pain, sorrow, anguish, folly, ignorance and all such things at all? As you say that your God is Almighty, It could easily do away with all those nasty things, and make this world a place of incessant bliss, there is no necessity of teaching through the process of flogging."



To this I replied, "You may hate pain, sorrow, anguish, folly, ignorance, &c., but of course, on the contrary, you love pleasure, jollity, enjoyment, knowledge and all such good things. Don't you?"

"There is no doubt about it," was the quick reply.

"Well my dear sir," said I, "there can be no pleasure without pain, no knowledge without ignorance."

"Strange! How can that be?" Questioned he.

To which I replied "Just imagine one incessant course of uniform pleasure without any break, since by hypothesis there is no break in the uniform course, you won't be able to compare your present state of happiness with any intermediate state and in that case you will not be able to know whether that state is happy state or not; for we think ourselves happy, when we compare our state of happiness with a previous state of inferior happiness, i.e., happiness mingled with a little bit of pain. So you see that uniformity of happiness is no happiness at all. You will only know yourself happy when you experience a little bit of pain, and greater the pain you feel, the greater the enjoyment of happiness you will get in return, for by comparison alone you will come to know how miserable you were and how happy now you are. A hungry man relishes his food, much more than one who has not so much hunger. Similar is the case with knowledge and ignorance. You can only know that you are more learned when you compare notes with your past school career. So you see that if you want to enjoy bliss, the pleasure of knowledge, and all such good things, you will have to take up pain, ignorance &c., along with them too. Pleasure and pain are the two sides of the same thing. You cannot take up pleasure without pain nor pain without pleasure. Therefore your idea of a world where there is perpetual, intense and uniform happiness, falls to the ground."

"But do they not tell of a place called Heaven where Indra reigns and is that not full of bliss perennial?" Inquired he. "How can you account for that? Do you believe that your scriptures simply imagine some false impossibilities?"

"Why? no. Those who share in the bliss of Heaven, they remember their past miseries in the world, and because they have the previous experiences of great miseries, they can supremely enjoy the pleasures of Heaven by comparing them with their past



miserable lives on the Earth." Such was my reply, at which he turned the course of our talk by saying, "Very well. Let us return to our old question. You said God is the combination of all what resists our desire and by so doing leads us. It is a sort of anti-power as regards ourselves, which is ever free and therefore almighty, and always resisting without being resisted. Has that power any intelligence? Can it feel as we do?" To this my answer was "Look into the workings of that Energy. Are they not orderly and regular? Can order and regularity come out of non-intelligence? Look at the flowers. How tastefully they are made! Look at the beauties of Nature. How sweetly they are spread before you for your enjoyment! Can they proceed from a Being that has neither feeling nor taste? Look at your own Self. You are nothing but as the Power is making you. It is gradually lifting you up from the lowly basement of ignorance to the exalted pinnacle of knowledge. It is making you more and more unselfish, more and more noble, more and more intelligent, more and more pious, as you grow more and more old. If you dive deep into the workings of this Power, you will gradually see that It is really bringing you up with a thousand times more care and love than what your parents can command."

At this he asked "How can that be since this Power resists my desire, whereas my parents love me and readily give me whatever I ask of them?" At this I questioned him in return, "Do your parents not resist your desires too, when your desires tend towards evil? The senses are the causes of our desire. Unless those desires be checked we will be lead hither and thither by the senses which are always misleading, for they confirm us in our errors of seeing as permanent what are impermanent. So you see that by checking desires the errors are checked. Is that not a great benefit? By timely resistance from this Power we are brought to a proper sense of our real position."

"But" replied he, "the Scriptures attribute to the Power we are speaking of, which you call God, many beautiful male and female forms. How can you account for that? As far as I have understood you, that Power can have no such form or if it has any, it is the whole universe. The whole universe is the body of that Infinite Power. It cannot be called either male or female, but males and females and all things proceed from It."



"Well, I see you have hit upon the universal Form of the Lord." I replied "But did I not tell you that that Power is a thousand times more loving than your parents, and is the repository of all sorts of powers and that there is none to resist It? This being the case, and it being the more natural, the more easy and more attractive for us to know It as our own dearest, most beautiful, most loving, and nearest of all friends and relations in the universe, we naturally look upon It as such and It becomes the most loving He or She at least for our sake, for what is impossible for an Almighty, All-merciful and All-loving Power. So you see, He (henceforth we should not call Him It) cannot be altogether unknown and unknowable. His very loving and kind nature disproves this. When those spotless, pure children of Nature, the Sages and Rishis of yore ardently desired to see their unseen Father, their unseen Mother that was supplying them with all their little wants, was keeping them from all unforeseen dangers, was decorating their sylvan abodes with exquisitely beautiful, and divinely fragrant flowers, was entertaining them daily with the melodies poured forth from the throats of Nature's sweet choristers, the gaudily dressed, and clear voiced merry denizens of the air, that Father or that Mother could not conceal Himself or Herself longer, and appeared before them as Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, as Saraswati, Lakshmi, Durga. So you see our Scriptures are nothing but a record of Divine Graces poured forth at different times on different fortunate, and pure-hearted individuals. These men are the authors of our Scriptures. They know something of God, and what they know they recorded for the benefit of the posterity."

The friend replied, "Well, it may be, your God is really loving and kind. In that case I cannot deny that, although I have much doubt about his loving kindness. But to return: you just now said that desires lead men to error. So according to you therefore the giving up of desire is the best means to escape from the grip of error." To this I answered, "Yes, moreover if you have no desire you will not experience any resistance from the hands of God. A permanent peace will be established between your God and yourself, i.e., your interest will be blended with that of God. Your ideas will be His ideas and vice versa, i.e. you will lose your own self in His self, as a river loses itself in the ocean." "But" added I, "Why don't you believe that He is All-loving





and All-merciful?"

"Because" said he "if He be All-merciful, He cannot be Almighty. For since He is All-merciful, how can He see one of His creatures suffer. That is against His nature. The moment He sees one of His children suffering, He will at once relieve him for He is almighty. But unfortunately my dear sir, that is not the case, as we daily experience in the world.

"Why" I replied "I do not experience any such thing in the world. A man once got a big ulcer on his back, which unless operated, would surely end in his death. The man was helpless and poor. But a kind doctor, who lived next door, came to see him of his own accord, without asking any fee, and made the necessary operations. O! the agony which the man was in, at the time of the operation is beyond all descriptions. The fond grandmother of the man began to rail at the doctor for his inhumanity. Do you join with the old lady to call him inhuman, although the man got perfectly cured after a few days? So although the doctor was apparently cruel yet he was very merciful. Similarly the apparently cruel God is nothing but merciful. But perhaps you will say, a doctor having but limited power, cannot help the poor man in a better way, but as regards God the case is altogether different with Him. He could cure him if He simply willed, without giving him so much trouble, for by hypothesis He is almighty. To this my answer is, that He could cure him in no time, no doubt as well as He could have given him no ulcer at all, but since He had purposely given that to him, He did not like to cure him so soon in order to remind him of his past misconducts and thus to make him more careful about his future conduct.

By this time the Sun has lifted himself up a considerable way above the horizon, and has been sending over us some of his lusty rays through the branches of the trees to remind us that we should go home and take upon ourselves the shares of our daily duties. Thus we departed.

I never met the young man again.



## THE HARMONY OF RELIGIONS.\*

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

I am sincerely grateful to the organisers of this conference for having allowed my humble self a place in the disciplined army of the soldiers of God. If the supreme aim of life is the attainment of perfect self-realisation in God-love and God-realisation, it follows that they who work in that direction and towards that goal deserve well of humanity, nay, deserve the love of humanity more than any others. He who had been to the Promised Land and tasted of its exceeding sweetness, and seen its exceeding brightness, and realised something of the peace that passeth all understanding is the natural cynosure of all eyes and the natural joy of all hearts. But all workers in the field divine cannot have that great and proud privilege, which is the supremest glory of life and which can be attained by one in a million and once in an age. But those few self-dedicated spirits who feel and obey the inner urge to go towards that goal and as they go along, reveal what they have learnt of the glory of the way and of the goal from those who have trodden the way and attained the goal also deserve the affection of humanity. I do not say this in a spirit of self-praise. Workers in the field of the love divine shrink from self-praise as well as the praise by brothers as being things that will lead them away from the supreme object of their quest. If their utterance breaks into songs and hymns about God, it is because out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh. They can no more resist to sing than the star can help vibrating light. Their mind blossoms in philosophy, because the sap of love-illumined reason must perforce break into bloom. The rose of philosophy cannot refuse to shine on the thorny plant of life any more than the Queen of flowers can refuse to shine at the top of the rose plant. It is thus an imperative inner necessity with them to seek and utter God. The claim that I thus make on behalf of ourselves is thus a reverential claim though it may seem to be an extravagant claim. Swami Vivekananda in one of his epoch-making speeches in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago called the organisers of such conferences as persons bearing aloft the Banner of Humanity. What a grand

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\* A lecture delivered at the second Universal Religion Conference under the auspices of the Sri Satchidananda Sangha.



idea! They are soldiers, but soldiers who do not kill men but create and conserve and perfect human beings; they are under command but they are under the command not of egoism but altruism; they bear arms but their arms are not temporal but spiritual; they achieve victories but their victories are not victories of passion over peace but peace over passion; they support not this or that earthly throne but the very throne of Grace.

No one who has allowed the searchlight of his intimate experience of life to play over the wide field of modernity can fail to realise and proclaim that materialism is on the increase all over the world and that religious feeling and passion and realisation are on the decline. The number of the church-going population in Christendom has notoriously gone down. Sundays are increasingly spent in target practice and in taverns and cinemas and theatres. Islam has severed the temporal power and the spiritual power of the Caliphate by a sudden stroke of its Damascan sword. The Caliphate has become a minor papacy and Turkey has become a republic. Zoroastrianism is becoming an annexure to absorption in trade. Buddhism is in the whirlpool of chaos in China and is a camp follower of nationalism in Japan.

Mr. J. E. Carpenter says: "It is stated by the North China Herald for July 13, that the present Chinese Government proposes to convert the Temple of Heaven into a model farm, and the Temple of Earth into a horse-breeding establishment!". Hinduism is in a state of sectarian chaos which seems likely to emerge in the result of the battle of the Kilkenny cats, unless in the meanwhile the insatiable materialism of modernity swallows up all of them in a single gulp. The Indian Bhajana is having a kind of death-in-life. All over the world man's cynosure is himself. This shifting of the centre of attention and attraction is the cause of the modern shibboleth of progress overruling and displacing to a large extent the older shibboleth of perfection. Progress is the God of materialism; perfection is the God of religion. Before we can realise what is religion, what are the elements of harmony in all religions, what is real harmony, and what is the true and vital and essential harmony of religions, we must pause to analyse a little these two basic conceptions of Progress and Perfection.

"Ideas rule the world." But it is a matter of the greatest importance to all—to individuals, to races and to humanity—that



right ideas should rule. Mr. J. B. Bury has analysed the idea of progress with consummate insight and power and it behoves us to pause and inquire into the idea of progress. We, Indians have to do this work in an even larger measure than others, as we have had a special heritage, and a special evolution and have to attain perfect self-expression while doing our duty by humanity at large and adjusting ourselves to it.

Christianity lays stress on the hope of felicity in another world. Modernity lays stress on progress in this world. But progress means forward movement in a certain direction. Our sense of the desirableness of the direction depends on our sense of the ultimate values in life. Progress, as Professor Bury says, involves 'a synthesis of the past and a prophecy of the future.' It involves the idea of a self-impelled unobstructed forward movement in a definite and desirable direction for an indefinite time. Its golden age is in the future and not in the past.

Thus the conception of movement involved in the idea of progress is linear, not cyclical. Its look is forward, not backward. Its reliance is on itself and not on something outside of itself. It is indifferent to "the Power not ourselves which makes for righteousness." It believes that there can be no obstruction or deterioration. Its hope is one of self-realisation in an indefinite period of time. Its directing motor-power is reason and its instrument is law. It is full of an irrepressible and unbounded optimism.

At first sight this ruling idea of the modern era seems to conflict with the great and deep-rooted Indian idea. Hindu culture affirms the cyclical character of civilisation. Its look is both backward and forward. It is more God-reliant than self-reliant. It knows that there are infinite possibilities of obstruction and deterioration. Its hope is fixed on the salvation of the individual, the betterment of civilisation being only one of the factors contributing to that consummation. Its motor-power is the scripture and its instrument is self-discipline. It is neither optimistic nor pessimistic and knows that the mind makes the future as it has made the past and the present and that there is an overruling Providence and that the universal goal is bliss.

Greece and Rome were wanting in the idea of progress; and in the mediæval ages the idea of Providence over-shadowed the idea of progress. The Greek theory of Destiny and the Christian





idea of original sin tainting each child were inimical to the idea of progress. It was the renaissance that brought a new self-confidence to reason, a new and wide human interest, and a new order of values in life. The Reformation and the Revolution completed the transition. Modern science and modern democracy and modern industrial and commercial and imperial expansion have led to the victory of the idea of progress and its enthronement in the modern human mind. Its gospel is utility; its basis is knowledge; its hope is in the ceaseless expansion of power and happiness.

But the history of man has not afforded indisputable proof of endless progress. Various great thinkers have sighed for a natural life as distinguished from the life of civilised progress. Science has wavered between optimism and pessimism in regard to human progress. Huxley has said, "Even the best of modern civilisations appears to me to exhibit a condition of mankind which neither embodies any worthy ideal nor even possess the merit of stability." He said also, "The theory of evolution encourages no millennial anticipations." The scientific anticipations and apprehensions about the end of the earth have also imposed a term upon man's dreams of infinite progress and perfectibility, though Frederic Harrison has tried to spread the doctrine that the dominant note of the new era is "the faith in human progress in lieu of celestial rewards for the separate soul." Tennyson has summed up the hope and despair of the age in his consummately attractive way, when he says.

"Is there evil but on earth? or pain in every peopled sphere?"

Well be grateful for the sounding watch-word, 'Evolution' here.

Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,

And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud."

It is no doubt true that the dogma of progress has introduced into universal life a new consideration for posterity. As Winwood Reade says: "Our own prosperity is founded on the agonies of the past. Is it therefore unjust that we also should suffer for the benefit of those who are to come?" Nay, Benjamin Kidd has well shown how those races have the securest and highest life in the present, who think wisely about the future and act in its best interests.



But the vital questions to be considered are : Is the dogma of progress the supreme truth ? Is it likely to be a permanent factor in human life ? Professor Bury propounds the question and leaves it unanswered. He says : "But if we accept the reasonings on which the dogma of progress is based, must we not carry them to their full conclusion ? In escaping from the illusion of finality, is it legitimate to exempt that dogma itself ? Must not it too, submit to its own negation of finality ? Will not that process of change, for which progress is the optimistic name, compel progress too, to fall from the commanding position in which it is now, with apparent security, enthroned ? A day will come in the revolution of centuries, when a new idea will usurp its place as the directing idea of humanity. Another star, unnoticed now or invisible, will climb up the intellectual heaven and human emotions will react to its influence, human plans respond to its guidance. It will be the criterion by which progress and all other ideas will be judged and it too will have its successor."

It seems to me that the conflicts of materialism and religion are due in a large measure to the modern confusion of thought in regard to the assumed contradiction involved in the ideas of progress and perfection. Ancient Hindu thought alone solved this seeming puzzle and showed the point of their reconciliation in a larger idea. Progress is the reflection of the Eternal Bliss in the plane of the mind. Perfection is the reflection of the Eternal Bliss in the plane of the spirit. There is no Eternal Law of progress. If nation and individuals are fired by a high ethos and are full of a passion of search for God, that period will be one of progress. If they revel in a low morality—individual and national and international—and are absorbed in worldliness that period will be one of deterioration in spite of superficial glitter of civilisation. There is no inevitable law of progress just as there is an inevitable law of gravitation.

"The mind is its own place,

And can make a heaven of hell or hell of heaven." If there is a period of real *Sattwic* progress, then the attainment of individual perfection will become easier and swifter in every way. We must never forget that progress is a process while perfection is a realisation. Progress is becoming ; perfection is being ; progress is the means ; perfection is the end. Progress is the racial efflorescence, perfection



is the individual fruitage. Monsieur Royer-Collard has said well : " Human societies are born, live and die, on the earth; it is there that their destinies are accomplished . . . . But they contain not the whole man. After he has engaged himself to society there remains to him the noblest part of himself those high faculties by which he elevates himself to God, to a future life, to unknown felicity in an invisible world. We, persons individual and identical, veritable beings endowed with immortality, we have a different destiny from that of states". Lotze has said equally well: " To prove that there is therein, what we choose to call a development, is not to gain an understanding of it which has any religious value. A finite being which itself shares in such a development may conceivably take an interest therein. It enjoys the transition from a less to a more complete condition. But looking to the world as a whole, it is not so clear who or what reaps any increase of joy from the fact that later forms and subjects are more perfect than earlier ones. The enthusiasts who prate of a perpetual progress in the world hardly know what they are talking about. Have they ever shown that this process of becoming what is aimed at, of coming to be the end is nobler, finer or more estimable than a restitution ever beginning afresh of a state of perfection ?"

Some thinkers have found the essence of religion to be in a feeling of love, others have found it to be in awe, reverence, wonder or dependence. More cynical and agnostic and destructive thinkers have sought to find the origin of religion in magic or totemism or animism. Others again have sought to derive it from the phenomenon of dreams or from the conception of ghosts or from ignorant fear of natural phenomena. I cannot go here into these strange and unproved and mutually destructive guesses at the origin of the religious impulse in man. But one thing must be clear on an ultimate analysis of the religious phenomena. The religious feeling is the expression of one of the primary impulses of our nature. Its impulse is not an impulse needed for organic evolution. The purely physical wants of man dictated the law of competition and survival of the fittest. His senses craved the solace of art. His mind sought to know the inner relations of things. But his spirit sought unceasingly for its own self-realisation. It was the deep calling to the deep. If the institution of private property is the response to the call of the body, the institution of religion is the



response to the call of the soul. Religion is the expression of the eternal and supersensuous and supersocial and divine element in man, though it expresses itself through conceptions of space and time and causation, manifests itself in beauty in the plane of the senses and as reason in the realm of the mind, and social love and service in the realm of society. The word 'religion' is derived from *religare* which means "to bind." It refers to the bond of love by which God and man are bound in bonds of love and communion. Goethe says, "To recognise God wheresoever and however he reveals himself, that is true blessedness on earth." Dr. Caird calls it "the absolute identification of my will with the will of God." Hegel says, "Religion is the knowledge acquired by the finite spirit of its essence as absolute spirit." It may be asked how religion could be both dependence and freedom, both knowledge and feeling and something beyond both, both renunciation and realisation. The point of reconciliation is in the basic definition of religion as the Realisation of the Infinite. Max Muller says well: "Religion consists in the perception of the Infinite under such manifestations as are able to influence moral character of man." The Realisation of the Infinite is the attainment of freedom from the finite by dependence on the Infinite, is both knowledge and feeling and also realisation which is beyond and above knowledge and feeling, and is that renunciation of the lower and narrower and more limited life of embodied self which is at the same time the Realisation of the Eternal Self. Schliermacher has said in beautiful words: "If we do not see our own miracles around us, if we do not perceive within us our own revelations, if our soul does not yearn to draw in the beauty of the whole world and to be pervaded by its spirit, if in the highest moments of our life we do not feel ourselves impelled by the divine spirit and speaking and acting from our own holy inspiration, if we do not at least, feel all that we feel as an immediate influence of the universe, and yet discover in it something that is our own, that cannot be imitated, but can prove its pure origin within ourselves, we have no religion."

Thus man can never rest content with the declarations of the senses. Religion is an effluence from within not a force from without. We can never know man till we know God. We can never know ourselves except through knowing Him. Religion





alone is the final barrier between the human and the sub-human kingdom. Without it life is an unmeaning puzzle, "a mere tale of sound and fury signifying nothing."

The modern illusion of infinite progress is more a shadow than a substance. The real goal is realisation of God, perfection. Hence is that there is no possibility of progress in true religion, though we can progress towards it. It will be ridiculous to speak of the progress of perfection though we can have progress towards perfection. God is perfection. A conditioned and limited world implies an unconditioned and perfect God. The world exhibits design; so there must be an all-wise designer guiding its evolution. The supreme moral order of the universe implies a Dispenser of the fruits of actions. Spirit alone is unity. The scientific assumption of matter or the matrix of everything is unproved and implies an ultimate supersensuous entity which continues in the causal form and yet is a continuous procession of effects. Nor is there any proof of the assumption that such matter was or could have been the *prius* of consciousness. It is the mind that reduces matter into a cosmos of time and space and causation. Matter may well be the vesture and expression of spirit; but spirit cannot be the derivative of matter. Science tries to investigate matter excluding mind but takes mind into the investigation, necessarily though unconsciously, and then performs the juggler's trick of deriving consciousness from matter. Indeed materialism moves in a vicious circle and can never negate in a rightly thinking mind the existence of God. I am not here concerned with the question whether God is Personality or the Absolute. I may say that it is only the self in a finite body that needs the pressure of an outside reality to attain the self-consciousness of personality. An infinite spirit can have self-consciousness without the need of such an outside impact. To it past and present and future will form an unrolled present; and it is beyond spatial limitations. Religion leads us to the realisation of an Infinite God either as an Infinite Absolute or as the oversoul with a universal frame. He is Law and Love; He is Sachidananda. He is not the slave of Law though He expresses Himself in Law (Gita). What is called miracle is only a higher law. It is the changing of the frame of things with a new influx of a new energy which results in the supersession of a lower law by a higher law.



In relation to the universal, God is the Creator and the preserver and the ruler and eventually the destroyer. He sets time and space and causation going, and by a process of the fine becoming gross the universe emanates.

Such is the essence of religion. It aims at discovering what is, as separate from what seems and why it is. Reason will certainly be unable to achieve the impossible task of weighing the Infinite in the balance of the finite, any more than even the cleverest acrobat can stand on his own shoulders (to adopt a famous simile of Sri Sankaracharya). But it can perceive and proclaim the hints of the Infinite in the finite and of

“Aught that for its grace

May be dear and yet dearer for its mystery.”

Religion completes reason and makes the fleeting perception, a permanent realisation. To it God is not the unknowable but the unknown yet Realisable. Is Infinite the mere negation of the finite? Is the Absolute the mere negation of Relativity? Is Chit or consciousness the mere negation of ignorance? Is Ananda or Bliss the mere negation of pain? No. The Absolute is always and is *Sachidananda* though it cannot be proved in halting terms of speech and thought. It is not what Herbert Spencer calls “a necessary datum of consciousness”; it is Consciousness and Bliss in itself and above all limitations of space and time and causation. Before we say that the world is limited we must have an inner standard which is either infinite or can sense the Infinite. Our consciousness cannot be both relative and conscious of relativity. It is wrong to say that God is a logical assumption; He is the supreme, nay the only Reality. Intuition of God followed by communion with God is the supreme gift of religion. It is described thus in noble verse by Wordsworth:

In such access of mind, in such hour

Of visitation from the living God,

Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.

Rapt unto still communion that transcends

The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,

His mind was a thanksgiving to the Power

That made him; it was blessedness and love.”

It is “a peace that passeth all understanding,” “a joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Religion has its feet in the sense of the



evanescence of things but its head is in the heaven of Eternal Bliss. The Infinite is not the negation of the Finite but is the Blissful and Eternal Absolute.

*(To be continued.)*

## NEWS AND REPORTS.

### **E. I. Ry. Co. and the Ramakrishna Mission.**

The Math at Belur is a religious centre, a house of prayer. The tranquility and seclusion which it has enjoyed for the past quarter of a century are as legitimately its own as the ground on which it stands. Countless devotees seek the calm atmosphere of this sacred monastery for the solace which it offers. Even traffic companies may not lack the imagination to see that the holy founders have chosen to build this house of prayer away from the busy streets of the city primarily with the object of avoiding the din and noise of traffic. We now come to understand that the East Indian Railway Company proposes to acquire certain plots of land adjoining the Ramakrishna Mission compound where the Belur Math stands. We also hear that the proposed acquisition includes a part of the land recently purchased by the Mission for the furtherance of its philanthropic activities and specially its scheme of technical instruction. If this proposal is carried into effect it would completely throttle the activities of the Mission and the monastery with its large temples built at a great cost would have to be abandoned as a religious centre for ever. Needless for us to say, that this would wound the susceptibilities of that large section of the Indian public who hold the ideas and the work of the Mission in deep veneration and would create a deep resentment in their minds. We hope that the Government will consider the matter, and refrain from giving its sanction to proposals which would end in wounding the religious sentiments of the people.

**Mrs. Clara M. Putae (Durga Devi) writes from Hindu Temple, San Francisco**

It gives me great pleasure to report the growth and activities of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco since the return of Swami Prakashananda.



We have never had such a large and constant attendance since the establishment of the Vedanta Centre here. Many new members have joined the Society and all feel that the Vedanta work on the Pacific Coast has attained a very strong and successful stage.

The subjects of the Sunday lectures generally given by Swami Prakashananda are wonderfully suited to the spirit of the new age, being a practical and inspiring appeal for the necessity of soul culture and development.

To-day the lecture was on "Action and Reaction in Spiritual Life". - That the seeker after wisdom must first establish an ideal and through life try to progress towards it. That the soul was our real nature and the more we strive to become spiritual the more and more will we discover and express our true selves and ascertain our true relation to the Divine. We are a combination of mind, body and spirit. Body and mind should be the instruments through which we will attain to the knowledge of Soul. The body and senses must be put under control, then the intellect is purified and through a pure and steady mind the divine nature of ourselves is reflected.

We should not be living as the beast carrying sandal wood, who only is conscious of the heavy load he bears and cannot smell the fragrance of the wood.

The subjects during the month of October were as follows:—

- "Is Self Control Indispensably Necessary?"
- "Is Heaven a Fairy Tale?"
- "How to Remain Unaffected in the Trials of Life."
- "How to Attain to God Consciousness."
- "Characteristics of a Liberated Soul."
- "Fourfold Practices of Higher Life."

Owing to Swami not returning until the latter part of June it was not possible to hold Yoga Class at the Ashrama this year, however the Ashrama was kept open for any students who wished to go and several availed themselves of the opportunity.

We are looking forward to the coming June when we will return to be blest and purified by a month of devotion and instruction under the gentle care of the Swami. Many of us can look back to these spiritual days at the Ashrama as the most blessed of our lives.





Since his arrival, Swami Prabhavananda is ably conducting the Tuesday Gita Classes and his answers to the questions at the end of his discourse have proved to be very helpful and interesting.

After the usual meditation class on Thursday evenings the Swami Prakashananda is giving a series of discourses on the Upanishads, which are never-failing sources of inspiration to the materialistic West.

The regular question class for the public on the first Thursday of every month is also drawing an unusual number of people.

We are enthused to note the ever-increasing sale of books and pamphlets, which is a sure criterion of the growth of a movement.

We are all really happy and feel privileged to have the two Swamis with us and hope to extend the scope of the Vedanta work as the opportunities present themselves.

#### Christmas Celebration at Belur Math

At Belur Math the head centre of the Ramakrishna Order, Christmas was celebrated as usual with all veneration and enthusiasm. Seeing some members busily engaged with the preparation whilst the others were sitting in small groups and talking about the Lord Jesus Christ and his teachings, Miss J. Macleod, an American friend and admirer of Srimat Swami Vivekananda, remarked that the Math looked exactly like a Christian home. The presence of Swami Bodhananda in the Math after an absence of about seventeen years in the West added much to the importance of the occasion. The picture of Mother Mary with Baby Christ on her bosom was tastefully decorated with flowers and foliage. Glittering china-wares containing cakes, fruits and other light refreshments were offered. Then the worship began partly after the Hindu and partly after the Christian fashion. All the devotees having prostrated before the Lord and taken their seats, portions from the New Testament were read. This was followed by a brief meditation. Then Srimath Swami Bodhananda gave a sermon the substance of which is as follows :---

It is meet and proper that we should assemble here to pay our veneration to Lord Jesus Christ, one of the greatest Avatars who incarnated in this world to guide humanity in the path of righteousness. To-day it is about two thousand years since Christ



was born in Palestine. About two thousand years before him Sri Krishna, another great saviour of mankind declared to Arjuna in the battle-field of Kurukshetra :

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अहं तदात्मनः सन् धर्मं स्थापयामि ॥

परित्रायाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताय ।

धर्मसंस्थापनायैव संभवामि युगे युगे ॥

“O Bharata, whenever righteousness declines and unrighteousness prevails, then I body Myself forth. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being in every age.”

In accordance with this Law of Avathar we find that all the great Incarnations of God have taken their birth when there was necessity for their doing so. Lord Jesus Christ also was born to fulfil the same Law. The religion that existed in Judaea before his birth was not a spiritual religion. It was a sort of legalism. A few men who called themselves the leaders of society formulated certain laws which were scarcely honoured in practice. When such was the condition the Supreme Lord projected Himself in the form of Jesus Christ to teach the real religion to the misguided humanity by living the spiritual life Himself. All of us present here know how Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna demonstrated by his life that the teachings of all perfected Souls do not contradict but fulfil one another and how by sincerely following any of them we can reach perfection. Therefore we have no difficulty in understanding and accepting the teachings of Jesus Christ. He taught the Spiritual Laws which we call Vedantha in the language of the people to whom he gave the message.

I told some of our Western brothers that Christianity is their adopted religion while their original religion was the Vedic religion which their ancestors possessed when they were one with the Hindu-Aryans but which they forgot after their migration to Europe. They admitted the possibility of it.

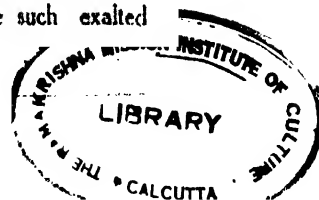
The Jews do not look upon Jesus Christ as a divine man. It is a well-known fact that the Hebrews had been persecuted from time immemorial. So out of despondency they were hoping and praying for the Messiah, a great king who would relieve them of all political difficulties. It was at that time that Jesus was born and he declared himself as the “King of the Jews.” They con-



cluded from this declaration that he might have been the Messiah whom they were expecting, but as Jesus did not concern himself with any political activities to deliver the Israelites from the foreign domination, they forsook him. The handful of men who followed him were called the Messiahists. However the Jews as a race look upon Jesus Christ only as a great man and not as a saviour of mankind.

It was Saint Paul who gave the divine aspect to Jesus. Paul was a great Greek scholar and he had learnt many of the doctrines of Hinduism and Buddhism from this literature. This saint came to believe in Jesus from the time he had a vision of him and as a mark of veneration gave him the title of "Christ" which is of Greek origin and which again is an adaptation of the word "Logos" which means the 'creative principle.' The word Christ means the 'anointed one.' In the name of Jesus Christ, Paul organised the church and preached the doctrines which are of Vedic and Budhistic origin and had found their way into the Greek literature. It was Paul again who gave Jesus Christ the mystic aspect such as doing miracles and healing the sick. Though Paul was the first to call Jesus as the 'Son of God,' this idea was not fully developed and universally recognised in his life time. Christianity remained more or less as a unitarian religion up to the fifth century A. D. in which a great patriarch named Athanasius gave the trinitarian aspect to it. It was at this time that the 'Sonship of God' was fully developed and Jesus Christ was preached as the only begotten Son of God. By studying the higher criticism on Bible we find that Christianity is a conglomeration of various religious ideas that were prevalent at that time.

Whatever may be the views of the critics, we Hindus have no difficulty in accepting Jesus Christ as the Son of God by which we mean an Avathar. We believe in the possibility of such a life as that of Jesus Christ. Even if Christ was not a historical person, it does not matter much provided we strongly adhere to the principles that are taught in his name. By living up to these principles, man is sure to advance morally and spiritually. Where we disagree with the Christians is in their belief that Jesus Christ is the only Son of God. We know that this earth has been blessed by many other souls who were as great as Jesus Christ in purity, mercy and self-denial. We also believe that many more such exalted





souls will incarnate from time to time when humanity will be in need of them. Knowing this Law of Avathar to be a fact we worship Lord Jesus Christ not as the only Son of God but as one among the many Sons of God that have come and that are yet to come for the good of humanity.

The sermon being over, there was meditation again for a while. Then *prasad* was distributed and the worship was brought to a close with the shouting "Jai Sri Christ Maharajki Jai."

Sree Ramakrishna Vidyapith, Deoghar.

This Vidyapith was started more than a year ago, as a residential school for Hindu boys, by the Sannyasins of the Ramakrishna Mission with the object of imparting physical, mental and moral education based on improved and up-to-date methods.

The magnanimous Zamindar Kumar Arun Chandra Singha of Paikpara has recently placed the public under a lasting debt of gratitude by making a free gift of a plot of land measuring about sixty bighas to the Ramakrishna Mission in the suburb of Deoghar (nearly twenty) acres to provide the Vidyapith with a suitable site.

This noble gift has given the Vidyapith a great lift, and filled the workers with inspiration for placing the institution on a permanent basis. It will require, however, a large sum of money for the erection of School buildings, for the provision of equipment besides a permanent fund for the recurring expenditure of the institution. This is far beyond the means of those who have taken up the work as their own. This appeal is therefore launched, for the necessary financial help, to all our countrymen who feel for their country and are interested in the cause of the education of the sons of India, and believe that our national salvation lies in the imparting of a right type of education through residential schools such as now has been started.

We fervently hope, that our generous countrymen who appreciate the humanitarian works of the Mission, will show their love for education and country by promptly responding to our appeal for funds. Any contributions however small will be gratefully received and thankfully acknowledged. A rupee from twenty-thousand people each, may help us to start the building operations immediately.

Swami Sivananda,  
President, Ramakrishna Mission.





All contributions to be sent to either of the following addresses:

1. *President, Ramkrishna Mission,*  
*Belur, Howrah.*
2. *Adhyaksha, (Rector) Ramkrishna Vidyapith,*  
*Deoghar, Behar*

**The Ramkrishna Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban.**

#### AN APPEAL.

"It is our privilege to be allowed to be charitable, for only so can we grow. The poor man suffers that we may be helpful. Let the giver kneel down and offer his thanks. Let the receiver stand up and permit.

Do you love your fellow-men? Where go to seek for God? Are not all the poor the miserable, the weak--Gods? Why not worship them first? Why go to dig a well on the shores of the Ganges?"

Brindaban is one of the holiest places of pilgrimage, where thousands of pilgrims from all parts of India congregate every year, many of whom fall a prey to disease, and being poor are naturally rendered quite helpless. To serve these people as *veritable manifestations of God*, the above institution was started in 1907, which has during these fifteen years of its existence been ministering to the comforts of thousands of men, women and children of all castes and creeds. In 1915 the Sevashrama purchased a plot of land on the bank of Jamuna, but for want of sufficient funds has not been able to construct the buildings suitable for a hospital. Though its existence has all along depended upon public charity, the demands made upon it were so great that it has always suffered from pecuniary stress, its expenses often exceeding its income, thereby creating a debt, which has now swollen to Rs. 1,500 nearly. It is needless to say that this debt is a serious menace to the stability of the Ashrama and it behoves the generous public to come forward to help to pay off this debt, in order to save the only useful Institution of its kind in one of the holiest places of pilgrimage in India.

Want of proper accommodation for the patients has long been a great hindrance to the efficient working of the Ashrama. To



remove this difficulty the construction of a Male Ward was undertaken in 1919. The building has not yet been completed. Its roofing was still unfinished when the project had to be abandoned temporarily for want of funds. It need hardly be pointed out that the removal of this long-felt want will greatly facilitate the work of the Ashrama.

A big hall with a separate operation room attached to it is also absolutely necessary for the out-door dispensary. The importance of this is too patent to need further description.

Another crying need of the Sevashrama is the worker's quarters. There is no separate building for the workers to live in. A wretched thatched mud-hovel of six years standing where medicines, Library books and medical instruments are huddled together—serves the purpose of protecting the workers from wind and rain. It would be a pity if the kind-hearted public do not look to the proper housing of those who have dedicated themselves to the service of suffering humanity.

For constructing the above wards as well as for the general upkeep of the Sevashrama, funds are urgently needed, and we appeal to the generous public with all the earnestness in our power to come forward and be helpful in removing the suffering of thousands of poor Narayanas. We can give this assurance that every single pie bestowed on this Ashrama will be most usefully spent and accounted for. Gentlemen desirous of perpetuating the memory of their departed dear relatives may avail themselves of this golden opportunity by having wards erected or beds endowed in their names. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received at the following addresses and acknowledged:

(1) The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur P. O.

Howrah;

(2) The Hony. Secy. Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban P. O., Muttra, U. P.

(Signed) Saradananda,  
Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission.



# The Vedanta Kesari

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want. And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads, and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"—*Swami Vivekananda*.

February, 1924.

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**SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE GREAT MASTER.**

(By *Swami Saradananda*)

**His Vedantic Sadhana**

(Continued.)

Initiation into sannyas being over, Tota Puri next took up the sacred duty of fixing the mind of his disciple into the superconscious state of that attributeless Absolute Brahman by the famous Vedantic method of 'not, this,' 'not this' (*neti, neti*). He said—

'Brahman which is ever pure, eternal, ever awake, ever free, beyond all conditions of time, space and causation, is the only Absolute Reality. Though the mysterious *maya* with all Her powers of miraculous creation makes It appear as broken into infinite parts and individualities, through the display of name and form, yet in its *own* nature Brahman is always undivided, indivisible Absolute. For in that super-conscious state of samadhi, none of these nescient products, like time and space, or name and form, is perceivable in the least. Therefore, all that belong to the realm of name and form are unreal, go beyond them all. Break off this cage of name and form with the prowess of a lion. Merge thy soul in the contemplation of that Absolute Reality of thyself. Let thy sole effort be to get thyself seated firmly in that glorious super-conscious state of samadhi. Then it would be thy perception that



this world of name and form is nought in that Brahman. Thy own little self, thou wouldst feel, as completely melted away in the consciousness of the Universal Being. And it would be the actual realisation that that Indivisible Absolute Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss) is no other than thy own self. The knowledge or consciousness that makes one perceive the existence of other persons or objects, or makes one hear of others, know that to be but limited. The limited is ephemeral and therefore should be shunned. The eternal unlimited bliss cannot exist in the limited. But the knowledge or consciousness that does not make one feel or hear of the dual existence of others is the Absolute. The unconditioned Absolute alone is the Infinite Bliss. The One who is the knower of all knowledge, how can He be *known*. How can the knower be an *object* of knowledge."

With such similar words and arguments, Tota at first tried to draw the mind of his disciple up to the absolute verity of Brahman and awaken in him the consciousness of a Transcendental Existence. We have heard it from the Master's own mouth that that day Tota tried his very best to bring all the force of his spiritual realisations acquired through the strenuous life of forty long years to bear upon the comprehension of his disciple, about that Absolute Brahman and evinced a determined eagerness to make him get into the consciousness of that Supreme Unity in samadhi at once. The Master used to say "After the initiation Nangta\* first instructed me in all the sacred conclusions of the Vedantic scriptures about the absolute reality of Brahman and asked me to lose myself in the meditation of the Atman making the mind perfectly contentless. But at the start I felt it extremely difficult to transcend the limitations of 'name and form' and make my mind absolutely contentless. Without much trouble I could withdraw my mind from all other objects but while going to make it absolutely contentless (*Nirvikalpa*) I found it impossible to make my mind get rid of the luminous spiritual form of my Divine Mother. Time and again I tried to make my mind empty of all thoughts and forms through contemplation upon the import of the Vedantic teachings, but time and again my effort was baffled by the appearance of that divine

\* The Master used to call Tota Puri, Nangta, as he used to roam about in a nude state. It is sometimes customary with the Paramahansas, i.e., the men of the highest realization to revert back to childlike simplicity and nakedness. The two extremes look alike.





form. At last finding it hopeless I opened my eyes and told Nangta that it was not possible for me to get into the meditation of the Atman by making the mind contentless. Nangta was very much excited to hear it and with a frown sharply retorted—'Let me see how it can't be,' and so saying, he began to search for something within the little hut and finding a broken piece of glass in a corner, he brought it and with its sharp point he forcibly pricked on my forehead between the eye-brows. He said 'Fix up your mind upon this point.' Then again I sat in meditation with a firm resolve, and when the vision of the Divine Mother appeared again before my mind, I imagined knowledge as a sword and with it I cut the figure into twain! And with it disappeared all contents of the mind and the mind soared with a great speed above *nama* and *rupa*, (name and form). I fell at once into samadhi."

When the Master fell into samadhi in the aforesaid manner, Tota Puri remained seated near him for a long time. Then finding the disciple well in the state, he slowly came out of the hut and locked the door from outside lest somebody might disturb the disciple. He went and sat under the Panchavati awaiting the call of the disciple from within the hut to open the door. But day passed and night too rolled away into the next morning and he heard no call from the disciple. Another two days and two nights passed away in similar expectancy! Tota Puri was extremely surprised at this. Of his own accord he got up from his seat and went to the hut, unlocked the door and found the disciple sitting exactly in the same posture as he was three days before when he left him locked within. There was no sign of animation whatsoever in the body. But the face was calm and serene and bathed with an ethereal lustre. Tota understood that his disciple is still in that state which is like death to the external world—His soul like 'a steady flame of light' was fixed upon that Transcendental being of Brahman.

Tota who was a connoisseur in matters relating to samadhi, was struck with wonderment, to behold the sight. He thought—could it be possible that what he had in his own life attained by strenuous and continuous efforts of forty long years, this marvellous man could gain it so easily in a day! He couldn't believe his eyes, and again began to scrutinize all the signs of the *Nirvikalpa*



*samadhi*, manifest on the body of the disciple. He felt if the heart was beating or if there were respirations in the nostrils. He again and again touched the different parts of the body which were motionless like a stiff log. But lo! there was absolutely no sign of consciousness nor life in them! Then Tota could not contain himself and cried out in very joy—"What a divine display of *Maya* is this!" Indeed, it was nothing but the *Nirvikalpa* state of *samadhi* which is considered as the climax of all spiritual realisations attainable through the path of *Jnana* as prescribed in the *Vedanta*.

Next, Tota adopted the usual method of recalling back the mind of his disciple from that *samadhi* to the normal consciousness, and the whole place began to reverberate with the deep and sonorous chanting of *Hari Om*. The Master regained the normal consciousness, shortly after.

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O Lord of the world, through Thy Yoga power  
Thou shinest as the Incarnation clear  
Of this our time. O Thou of strict restraint,  
Only through Thine unstinted grace we see  
The mind in *Samadhi* completely merged;  
Mercy Incarnate! austere are Thy deeds.

Thou dealest to the din of Misery  
Destruction. Kal's binding cords  
Are cut by Thee asunder. Thine own life  
Thou gavest freely, O sweet Sacrifice,  
O best of men! O Saviour of the world!

*Swami Vivekananda.*

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## NOTES OF THE MONTH.

## The Swami Vivekananda.

The day of commemoration has just passed and those of us who reverently cherish the memory of the patriot-saint of Modern India have had the occasion to meditate upon the many-sided nature of his personality and the new strength which he infused into our national being. He has brought hope to the hopeless, inspiration to the young and has succeeded in moulding heroes out of common clay; his works, the written record of his teachings stand as a permanent heritage to the thinkers of all nations. His vision and insight into human nature are too profound to fall within the limits of ordinary comprehension and it is needless for us to add that his philosophy of life evades all conventional analysis. Some may hold that virtue originating from manliness was the central theme of Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of life, others may say that love and compassion were the guiding principles which actuated that noble life to spend itself in the service of humanity, still others may hold that he, the lion of Advaita Vedanta had transcended the ordinary conceptions of duty and as a *Siddha Purusha*, it was a part of his play to lead thirsting millions to the waters of life. We are not going to venture to add to these existing opinions. Yet it behoves us, his humble admirers and followers to contemplate upon the various phases of that active life which it is our privilege to endeavour to follow and imitate.

• • • • •

He loved us all, loved our motherland, loved her culture and her ideals and as he himself had so often expressed, the very dust of India was sacred to him. But let us not forget, that the passionate love which he bore to India was only a part of the much greater love which he bore to humanity. With the eye of a prophet, he discerned the approaching gloom and saw clearly that the world was drifting towards ruin and desolation. He saw that the weeds of narrow jingo nationalism, which had risen up everywhere in the cornfield of life were tending to destroy civilization itself. Justice, compassion, and brotherly love the grand ideals for which saints and martyrs all over the world had shed their precious blood were about to be crushed out of existence by the growing greed of gold.



and the liend's own gospel of "Every man for himself." This new gospel was imported from the West. Intoxicated with the wine of temporal power the nations of the West were out on the venture of civilizing the world. Their religious teachings tended to make the young and the unthinking amongst us, to look upon the world, the sun and the moon and the starry heavens as so many things created by a merciful God as awards for good behaviour and slavish submission. Along with these tame religious teachings were also imported the cold facts of science which blotted the heavens altogether out of existence; and the joys of heaven, having vanished in such an unseemly fashion, left the fruits of the earth as the sole motive for struggle and endeavour. The scramble for the petty joys of life was thus the outcome of the education that we received from the West. As day follows night, this scramble led to fights and squabbles and to the gospel of "Every man for himself." But it was soon found that this dictum was not sufficient even as a working rule of life. Humanity was not so degraded, nor was life such a sordid affair, as to thirst for the petty joys which this earth has to offer. There was a need here, as well as in the West for a new gospel, a new view life. The heaven which the antiquated church had to offer had passed into the region of myth and the thinking millions of the West refused to acknowledge the rule of any tyrant who sitting amidst the clouds was dispensing rewards and punishments to such as who found favour or disfavour at the hands of his scheming priests. The noblest of mankind had also recognised the fact that the joys of this world are too sordid to be the goal of life. It was at this juncture that the cyclonic Hindu Monk appeared in the world to raise India out of her long slumber and to hold forth a new gospel, a new God, and a new philosophy of life to all the nations of the world.

Priests of the old order held forth the joys of heaven for those who cared to follow them. This modern prophet, this new awakener of souls comes to us with a totally different message. He has no candies to offer, either of this world or of the next. His gospel is a heroic gospel, a gospel of renunciation. "Seek no comfort either here or hereafter, be ready to suffer all trials and tribulations, to lay down your life, nay, to forego even your own liberation or the service of mankind," this was what he demanded of his





children and of his followers. "For the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, is the Sanyasin born. His life is all in vain indeed, who embracing Sanyasa, forgets this ideal. The Sanyasin verily is born into this world to lay down his life for others, to stop the bitter cries of men, to wipe the tears of the widow, to bring peace to the soul of the bereaved mother, to equip the ignorant masses for the struggle of existence, to accomplish the secular and spiritual well-being of all through the diffusion of spiritual teachings and to arouse the sleeping lion of Brahman in all by throwing in the light of knowledge." These are the words of Swamiji, in these words he has set forth to a certain extent the ideal of his mission. Throughout his teachings we hear him exhorting us to throw off all false gods and sacrifice our all at the altar of the only living God, the living Narayana. "Where should you go to seek for God,—are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak, gods? Why not worship them first? Why go to dig a well on the shores of the Ganges?" "You have read *तानुदेवो भव, पितृदेवो भव* 'Look upon your mother as God, look upon your father as god'—but I say, *दरिद्रदेवो भव मूर्खदेवो भव*—The poor, the illiterate, the afflicted—let these be your god. Know that service to these alone is the highest religion."

The Church in the West preached the doctrine of a ready-made world with rigid ready-made rules and dogmas, with hell-fire on one side and the allurements of heaven on the other. The rebels were to be cast off on one side to undergo endless agony and the slaves who submit to the rules and dogmas were to be placed in heaven to live there ever-after. This scheme of the universe, unfortunately gives no hand in the business to the puppets and marionnettes of men and women who are pulled across the stage to undergo ever-lasting agony or ever-lasting happiness. They are brought into existence, without their ever asking for it and are converted into fuel for hell-fire or abject slaves for eternity. This ready-made comfortable doctrine of a ready-made hard set world did not please the thinking minds of the West. Swami Vivekananda gave a different evaluation to life on earth. Often he has told us that this world is by no means the best possible of all worlds, and hence the grand opportunity to struggle and suffer to contribute to the making of the world. He preached the doctrine of Karma Yoga,



work for its own sake, and in doing so, he gave a new meaning to life itself. He has demonstrated to us that no god or fiend need goad us on to act virtuously. Human life was a venture worthy in itself.

\* \* \*

The first Hindu monk to the West has also contributed largely to bring about a better understanding between the East and the West. He knew that the monster of Hate, which stalking about the world had devastated the fair face of the earth, was the off-spring of fanaticism and religious intolerance. The church in the West, although one blushes to say it, brought up and fostered the monster of nationalism which bids fair to swallow up its own dame. With a scowl on their face the Christian priests went on damning the "heathen" to such an extent that their flock, the well meaning Christian folk thought it their sacred duty to keep the temporal affairs of the "heathen" in their own hands so as to give the priests an opportunity to minister to the needs of his soul. The church submitted the unbelievers to eternal perdition; and the Christian nations began fighting against one another to carry on the ignoble work of reducing the pagan nations to perpetual slavery. Wiser counsels are ruling now, and mankind is coming to realise that war and strife will not cease to be, unless religious toleration is first established. The light of Vedanta is steadily spreading its lustre all over the world, thanks to the efforts of modern scientists who have given a rather rude shock to the superstitions of the established church. When regenerate India takes her place amongst the nations as an equal amongst equals, she will feel grateful for the apostle of Vedanta who discovered and pointed out to her the fountains of her national strength. The nations of the world cannot also fail to show their gratitude to this monk, who has lighted the fire of love in the heart of India for one and all, for the best of men now come to realise that in India lies the hope of the world.

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## PAGES FROM THE PAST.

We give below a letter received from an American disciple of the great Swami Vivekananda and a few newspaper clippings kindly sent by her to Srimath Swami Brahmanandaji in 1908 and we hope that these pages from the past would help the admirers of Swamiji to live back, at least for a short while, in the memory of those blessed days when Swamiji was still in their midst. . . .

*Editor V. K.*

85, Alfred Street, Detroit, Mich.

My dear Swami,

The "Inspired Talks" arrived a few days ago and how can I thank you for sending them to me? They are doubly dear coming from one so close to the Beloved. Thank you more than I can express in words. It made me very happy when I read the inscription on the blank page. I shall treasure it all my life. How much we owe to those who have given us such a beautiful edition of the work. I feel that we owe Miss G. much for making it possible, as we do also to all those who have helped towards the publication.

How very wonderful was our life that blessed summer at Thousand Island Park! It all comes back to me so vividly, the cottage at the crest of the hill, balanced as it were on a rock, the upper verandah where we used to sit up till the "wee small hours" the mysterious moonlight and the fitful gleam of the search-light of the St. Lawrence River steamers. It was almost weird—a fit setting for the figure of our Guru, walking up and down. God-inspired if ever man was; we faintly held our breath, fearing to lose a single word.

There is no record of those wondrous nights, save that which is indelibly written upon the tablets of our hearts. God grant that it may be given unto us to embody in our lives that which He gave so freely. His whole life was an inspiration. Blessed indeed are we to have known such an One!

I suppose Sister C—has told you many of the little anecdotes



concerning him. Aside from his great spiritual gifts, he was so full of boyish fun and his wit and repartee were sparkling. I remember that on his first visit to Detroit, when he was lecturing at the Unitarian Church, we were told that the Swami would be glad to answer any question we might wish to ask. The questions were to be written and put in a box one night and the Swami was to answer them publicly the evening following. Many of the questions submitted were serious, others were trivial and flat. Of course, some ninny asked the same old question about Hindu mothers throwing their babies to the crocodiles, etc. I noticed the Swami shrink as he read it and then came a smile of merry mischief and he told in a half serious, half comic manner how, when he was a baby, his mother took him to the Ganges but that he was "such a fat little baby the crocodiles refused to swallow me"; and he added facetiously "whenever I feel badly about being such a fat monk, I think of how I was saved from the crocodiles and am comforted." Then he suddenly became very serious, even stern, drew himself up proudly and in tones of thunder hurled forth, "But, ladies and gentlemen, we, I assure you, never burned witches." This brought down the house and there was cheer after cheer, for an American audience enjoys a joke on itself and none of us are proud of the burning of witches at Salem.

Dear Swami—I am enclosing the newspaper clippings of fifteen years ago, for I think they may be of interest to you. They are priceless to me and cannot be duplicated. I trust that you will not consider it selfish in me to ask you to return them, but at your leisure. I have so few mementos of him and you have the Math, his room, and the sacred spot under the Bel tree. Please keep them as long as you wish and believe me to be,

With love and gratitude,

Yours very sincerely,

*Mary C. Funke.*





*Detroit Free Press, Thursday February 15, 1894.*

MOST MORAL NATION

Vivekananda states he so considers India.

Though in bondage its spirituality endures.

Eloquent address by the Eastern Brother.

Tonight he will speak on "Hindu Philosophy".

An audience that filled the Unitarian Church heard the renowned Monk, Swami Vivekananda, deliver a lecture last night on the manners and customs of his country. His eloquent and graceful manner pleased his listeners, who followed him from beginning to end with the closest attention, showing approval from time to time by outbursts of applause. While his lecture was more popular in character than the celebrated Address before the religious congress in Chicago, it was highly entertaining, especially where the speaker diverted from the instructive portions and was led to an eloquent narration of certain spiritual conditions of his own people. It is upon matters religious and philosophic (and necessarily spiritual) that the eastern brother is most impressive, and, while outlining the duties that follow the conscientious consideration of the great moral law of nature, his softly modulated tones, a peculiarity of his people, and his thrilling manner are almost prophetic. He speaks with marked deliberation, except when placing before his listeners some moral truth, and then his eloquence is of the highest kind.

It seemed somewhat singular that the eastern monk who is so out-spoken in his disapproval of missionary labour on the part of the Christian church in India, (where, he affirms, the morality is the highest in the world) should have been introduced by Bishop Ninde, who in June will depart for China in the interest of foreign Christian missions. The Bishop expects to remain away until December, but if he should stay longer he will go to India. The Bishop referred to the wonders of India, and the intelligence of the educated classes there, introducing Vivekananda in a happy manner. When that dusky gentleman arose, dressed in his turban and bright gown, with handsome face and bright, intelligent eyes, he presented



## VEDANTA KESARI

an impressive figure. He returned thanks to the Bishop for his words and proceeded to explain race divisions in his own country, the manners of the people and the different languages. Principally there are four northern tongues and four southern, but there is one common religion. Four-fifths of the population of 300,000,000 people are Hindoos and the Hindoo is a peculiar person. He does everything in a religious manner. He eats religiously; he sleeps religiously; he rises in the morning religiously; he does good things religiously and he also does bad things religiously. At this point the lecturer struck the great moral keynote of his discourse, stating that with his people it was the belief that all non-self is good and all self is bad. This point was emphasized throughout the evening and might be termed the text of the address. To build a home is selfish, argues the Hindoo; so he builds it for the worship of God and for the entertainment of guests. To cook food is selfish, so he cooks it for the poor; he will serve himself last if any hungry stranger applies, and this feeling extends throughout the length and breadth of the land. Any man can ask for food and shelter and any house will be opened to him.

The caste system has nothing to do with religion. A man's occupation is hereditary, a carpenter is born a carpenter; a goldsmith, a goldsmith; a workman, a workman, and a priest, a priest; but this is a comparatively modern social evil, since it has existed only about 1,000 years. This period of time does not seem so great in India as in this and other countries. Two gifts are especially appreciated—the gift of learning and the gift of life. But the gift of learning takes precedence. One may save a man's life; and that is excellent; one may impart to another knowledge, and that is better. To instruct for money is an evil, and to do this would bring opprobrium on the head of the man who barter learning for gold, as though it were an article of trade. The Government makes gifts from time to time to the instructors, and the moral effect is better than it would be if the conditions were the same as exist in certain alleged civilized countries. The speaker had asked through the length and breadth of the land what was the definition of civilization, and he had asked the question in many countries. Sometimes the reply had been given: "What we are, that is civilization." He begged to differ in the definition of the word. A nation may control the elements, develop the



utilitarian problems of life seemingly to the limit and yet not realize that in the individual the highest type of civilization is found, in him who has learned to conquer self. This condition is found in India more than in any country on earth, for there the material conditions are subservient to the spiritual, and the individual looks for the soul manifestations in everything that has life, studying nature to this end. Hence that gentle disposition to endure with indomitable patience the slings of what appears unkind fortune, the while there is a full consciousness of a spiritual strength and knowledge greater than possessed by any other people; hence the existence of a country and a people from which flows an unending stream that attracts the attention of thinkers far and near to approach and throw from their shoulders an oppressive earthly burden. The early kings, who, 260 B. C., commanded that there should be no more bloodshed, no more wars, and who sent forth instead of soldiers an army of instructors, acted wisely, although in material things the land has suffered. But though in bondage to brutal nations who conquer by force, the Indian spiritually endures forever, and nothing can take it away from him. There is something Christlike in the humility of the people to endure the stings and arrows of outraged fortune, the while the soul is advancing towards the brighter goal. Such a country has no need of Christian missionaries to "preach ideas", for theirs is a religion that makes men gentle, sweet, considerate and affectionate toward all God's creatures, whether man or beast. Morally, said the speaker, India is head and shoulders above the United States or any other country on the globe. Missionaries would do well to come there and drink of the pure waters, and see what a beautiful influence upon a great community have the lives of the multitude of holy men.

The marriage condition was described; and the privileges extended to women in ancient times, when the system of co-education flourished. In the records of the saints in India there is the unique figure of the prophetess. In the Christian creed they are all prophets, while in India the holy women occupy a conspicuous place in the holy books. The householder has five objects for worship. One of them is learning and teaching. Another is worship of dumb creatures. It is hard for Americans to understand the last worship and it is difficult for Europeans to



appreciate the sentiment. Other nations kill animals by wholesale and kill one another; they exist in a sea of blood. A European said that the reason in India animals were not killed was because it was supposed that they contained the spirits of ancestors. This reason was worthy of a savage nation, who are not many steps from the brute, the fact being that the transmigration of souls theory was evolved by a set of atheists in India and was never a religious doctrine, it was an idea of a materialistic creed. The worship of dumb animals was pictured in a vivid manner. The hospitable spirit—the Indian golden rule was illustrated by a story. A Brahmin, his wife, his son and his son's wife had not tasted food for some time on account of a famine. The head of the house went out and after a search found a small quantity of barley. He brought this home and divided it into four portions, and the small family was about to eat, when a knock was heard at the door. It was a guest. The different portions were set before him and he departed with his hunger satisfied, while the quartette who had entertained him perished. This story is told in India to illustrate what is expected in the sacred name of hospitality.

The speaker concluded in an eloquent manner. Throughout his speech was simple, but whenever he indulged in imagery, it was delightfully poetic, showing that the eastern brother has been a close and attentive observer of the beauties of nature. His excessive spirituality is a quality which makes itself felt with his auditors, for it manifests itself in the love for animate and inanimate things, and in the keen insight into the mysterious workings of the divine law of harmony and kindly intentions.

Tonight, Vivekananda will speak at the Unitarian Church on "Hindoo Philosophy". In this lecture his scholarly attainments will undoubtedly find even broader scope and the opportunity will be given for a more liberal presentation of his religious views.

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*The Detroit Free Press, 16th February 1894.*

### SONGS OF SOLOMON.

Vivekananda views them with the greatest admiration.

One should not approach God in a begging spirit

*Story of the Religion of a Hindoo Saint.*

Another lecture this afternoon (February 16th 1894) on  
Hindoo Philosophy.

Vivekananda delivered a lecture on "The Love of God" at the Unitarian church last night, before the largest audience that he has yet had. The trend of the lecturer's remarks was to show that we do not accept God because we really want Him, but because we have need of Him for selfish purposes. Love, said the speaker, is something absolutely unselfish; that which has no thought beyond the glorification and adoration of the object upon which our affections are bestowed. It is a quality which bows down and worships and asks nothing in return. Merely to love is the sole request that true love has to ask. A story was told of the religion of a Hindoo saint.<sup>1</sup> She said to her husband, the emperor, when they were married, "I am already married."

"To whom?" asked the emperor.

"To God," was the reply.

She went among the poor and needy and taught the doctrine of extreme love for God. One of her prayers is significant, showing the manner in which her heart was moved: "I ask not for wealth; I ask not for position; I ask not for salvation; place me in a hundred hells, if it be Thy wish, but let me continue to regard Thee as my Love." The early language abounds in the beautiful prayers of this woman. The lecturer repeated one in which she idealizes the wondrous sweetness of a kiss from God. When her sad end came it was thought that she ushered into Samadhi upon the banks of a river she composed a beautiful song, in which she stated that she was going to meet her beloved. Men, remarked the lecturer, are capable of philosophical analysis on religion. A woman is devotional in nature and loves God from the heart and soul and not from the mind. The songs of Solomon were cited by the speaker as one of the most

(1) Mirabai.



beautiful parts of the Christian Bible. The language in them is much of that affectionate kind that is found in the prayers of the early Hindoo woman, who founded a beautiful creed in India. And yet the speaker stated he heard that the Christians were going to have those incomparable songs removed. He heard an explanation of the songs in which it appeared that Solomon loved a young girl and desired her to return his royal affection. The girl, however, loved a young man and did not want to have anything to do with Solomon. This explanation was excellent to some people because they could not understand such wondrous love for God as is embodied in the songs. The love for God in India is different from the love for God elsewhere, because when you get into a country where the thermometer is 40 degrees below zero the temperament of the people changes. The aspirations of the people in the climate where the books of the Bible were said to have been written were different from the aspirations of the cold-blooded western nations, where they are more apt to worship the almighty dollar with the warmth expressed in the songs than they are to worship God. The love for God seems to be based upon a basis of 'what can I get out of it?' In their prayers they ask for all kinds of selfish things.

Christians are always wanting God to give them something. They appear as beggars before the throne of the Almighty. A story was told of a beggar who applied to an emperor for alms. While he was waiting, it came time for the emperor to offer up prayers. The emperor prayed: Oh, God, give me more wealth; give me more power; give me more empire."—Hence the beggar started to leave, the emperor turned —

"Why are you going?" he asked.

"I don't beg of beggars," was the reply.

Some people find it difficult to understand the frenzy of religious fervor which moved the heart of Mahomet. He would grovel in the dust and writhe in agony. Holy men who have experienced these extreme emotions have been called epileptic. Throughout his discourse the speaker emphasized the absence of thought of self which should characterize the love for God. Religion nowadays have become a mere hobby and fashion. People go to church like a flock of sheep. They do not embrace God



because they need Him. Most persons are unconscious atheists, who self-complacently think that they are devout believers. In a forcible manner Vivekananda referred to the foibles of the western world and there was much justice in his comments upon alleged western culture.

This afternoon Vivekananda will give a lecture at the residence of Mrs. John J. Bagley upon certain phases of Hindoo philosophy. It is not an invitational affair, but tickets may be obtained in the same way that they were for the other lectures. It is understood that the lecture will be of especial interest.

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*The Detroit Free Press, February 22, 1894.*

IT IS IRONY OF FATE

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Christian Religion preached in the name of Luxury.

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Vivekananda so speaks of religious teachings here.

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Idols in India are nothing but suggestive symbols.

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*The Hindu Monk lectured yesterday (February 21st 1894)  
at the Home of Mrs. John J. Bagley*

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The most interesting lecture Vivekananda has yet delivered was that of yesterday afternoon at the residence of Mrs. John J. Bagley, on the different Hindoo philosophies. The large rooms were crowded. The Monk spoke for two hours about the different philosophies, showing how thousands of years ago the spiritual science of India had reached a condition equal to that of to-day. As on other occasions the talk was freely interspersed with charming stories from the Sanscrit.

Of the different philosophies, the tendency of the Hindoo is not to destroy, but to harmonize everything. If any new idea comes into India they do not antagonize it, but simply try to take it in, to harmonize it, because this method was taught first by their prophet, God incarnate on earth Sri Krishna. The Incarnation of God preached himself first: "I am the God incarnate, I am the inspirer of all books, I am the inspirer of all religions." Thus we do not reject any, said Vivekananda. That was his teaching, and he now taught what is meant by Incarnation. "There is one thing which is very dissimilar between us and Christianity, something



which we never taught. And that is the idea of salvation through Jesus' blood, or cleansing by any man's blood. We had our sacrifices as the Jews had. Our sacrifices mean simply this: That here is some food I am going to eat and until some portion is offered to God it is bad, so we offer the food, which is the pure and simple idea.<sup>1</sup> But with the Jew the idea is that my sin be upon this lamb, and let the lamb be sacrificed and I shall go scot-free. We never developed that beautiful idea in India and I am glad we did not. I, for one, would not come to be saved by such a doctrine. If anybody would come and say, 'Be saved by my blood,' I would say to him: 'My brother go away; I will go to hell; I am not a coward to take innocent blood to go to heaven; I am ready for hell.' So that doctrine never cropped up amongst us, and our prophet says, that whenever evil and immorality prevails on earth He will come down from time to time and support his children, and this He is doing from time to time and from place to place, and wherever on earth you see an extraordinary holy man trying to uplift humanity, know that He is in him. *He*

So you see that is the reason why we never light any religion. We do not say that ours is the only way to salvation. Perfection can be had by everybody, and what is the proof? Because we see the most holy men in all countries: good men and women everywhere, whether born in our faith or not. Therefore it cannot be held that this is the only way to salvation. "Like so many rivers flowing from the different mountains, all coming and mingling their waters in the sea, all the different religions taking their births from different standpoints of fact all come unto Thee." That is a part of the child's every-day prayer. Now with such every-day prayers, of course, such ideas as fighting because of different religions is simply impossible. So much for the philosophers of India. We have great regard for all these men, especially this prophet, on account of his wonderful catholicity for harmonizing all the preceding prophecies.

"Then the man who is bowing down before the idol." It is not in the same sense as you have heard of the Babylonian and the Roman idolatry. It is peculiar to the Hindus. The man is before the idol and he shuts his eyes and tries to think that I am he. "Neither have I death nor life; I had neither father nor





mother ; I am not bound by time nor space ; I am existence infinite, bliss infinite, and knowledge infinite ; I am he, I am he ! I am not bound by books nor holy places, nor pilgrimages, nor anything whatsoever ; I am existence absolute ; bliss absolute I am he, I am he ! ' This he repeats and then says : ' O, Lord, I cannot conceive Thee as in myself ; I am a poor man.' Religion does not depend upon knowledge. It is the very soul itself, it is God ; not to be got by simple book knowledge, nor by powers of speech. We may take the most learned man that you have and ask him to think of spirit as spirit, and he cannot. You may imagine spirit ; he may imagine spirit. It is impossible to think of the spirit without education. So no matter how much theology you may learn, you may be a great philosopher and a great theologian, but the Hindoo boy would say, -- ' Well, that has nothing to do with religion.' Can you think of spirit as spirit ? Then alone all doubt ceases ; all the crookedness of the heart is made straight ; then all tears, harshness, all doubtings are for ever silent, when man's soul and God's soul come face to face.

" A man in the western sense may be wonderfully learned, but he has not his first A B C's of religion yet. I would tell him that. I would ask him : ' Can you think of the spirit as such ? Are you advanced in the science of the soul ? Have you manifested your own soul above matter ? ' If he has not, then I say to him : ' Religion is not come to you ; it is all talk and book and vanity.' But this poor Hindoo sits before that idol and tries to think that ' I am he,' and then says : ' O, Lord I cannot conceive Thee as spirit, so let me conceive Thee in this form,' and then he opens his eyes and sees this form, and, prostrated, he repeats his prayers. Then when his prayer is ended he says : ' O, Lord excuse me for this imperfect worship of Thee.'

You have been always learning that the Hindoo worships blocks of stone. Now what do you think of this devout nature of the souls of these people ? I am the first that has come over to these western countries ; it is the first time in the history of the world that a Hindoo monk has crossed the ocean, but we hear of such criticisms and hear of these talks, and what is the general attitude of my nation towards you ? They smile and say : " They are children ; they may be great in physical science, they may build huge things, but in religion they are simply children." That is the attitude of our people.



"One thing I would tell you, and I do not mean any unkind criticism. You train and educate and clothe and pay men to do what I to come over to my country to curse and abuse all my forefathers, my religion and everything. They walk near a temple and say: 'You idolaters, you will go to hell.' But they dare not do that to the Mahomedans of India; the sword would be out. But the Hindoo is too mild; he smiles and passes on, and says 'Let the fools talk.' That is the attitude. And then you, who train men to abuse and criticise, if I just touch you with the least bit of criticism, with the kindest of purpose, you shrink and cry: 'Don't touch us; we are Americans. We criticise all the people in the world, curse them and abuse them, say anything, but do not touch us; we are sensitive plants.' You may do whatever you please, but at the same time I am going to tell you that we are content to live as we are; and in one thing we are better off—we never teach our children to swallow such horrible stuff, that man alone is vile where everything else is pure. And whenever your ministers criticise us let them remember this. If all India stands up and takes all the mud that is at the bottom of the Indian Ocean and throws it up against the western countries, it will not be doing an infinitesimal part of that which you are doing to us. And what for? Did we ever send one missionary to convert anybody in the world? We say to you: 'Welcome to your religion, but allow me leave to have mine.' You call yours an aggressive religion. You are aggressive and how many have you taken? Every sixth man in the world is a Chinese subject, all Buddhists; then there are Japan, Thibet, and Russia and Siberia, and Burmah and Siam, and it may not be palatable, but this Christian morality, the Catholic Church is all derived from them. Well, and how was this done? Without the shedding of one drop of blood! With all your brags and boasting, where has your Christianity succeeded without the sword? Show me one place in the whole world. One, I say, through the history of the Christian Religion— one; I do not want two. I know how your forefathers were converted. They had to be converted or killed; that was all. What can you do better than Mahomedanism, with all your bragging? We are the only one and why? 'Because we can kill others.' The Arabs said that; they bragged. And where is the Arab now? He is the Bedouin. The Romans used to tell that, and where are they now. And we



have been sitting there on our blocks of stone. Blessed are the people who shall enjoy the earth! Such things tumble down; it is built upon sands; it cannot remain long. Everything that has selfishness for its basis, competition as its right hand and enjoyment as its goal, must die sooner or later; such things must die. Let me tell you brethren, if you want to live, if really you want your nation to live, go back to Christ. You are not Christians, No, as a nation you are not. Go back to Christ! Go back to Him who has nowhere to lay His head. The birds have their nests and the beasts their lairs, but the son of man hath nowhere to lay His head. Yours is religion preached in the name of luxury. What an irony of fate! Reverse this if you want to live, reverse this. It is all hypocrisy that I have heard in this country. If this nation is going to live, go back to Him. You cannot serve God and Mammon at the same time. All this prosperity, all this from Christ! Christ would have denied all such heresies. All such prosperity which comes with Mammon is transient, is only for a moment. Real permanence is in Him. If you can join these two, this wonderful prosperity with that ideal of Christ, it is well, but if you cannot, better, go back to Him and give these up. Better be ready to live in rags with Christ than to live in palaces without Him."

*The Detroit Free Press, March 11, 1894*

NOT EASY TO CONVERT

The people of India take the bait but not the hook.

Missionaries are not in sympathy with the people

Do not speak the language or understand the natives.

*Vivekananda's Lecture on the evening of the  
11th March 1894, at the Detroit Opera House.*

Vivekananda spoke to a crowded audience at the Detroit Opera House last night. He was given an extremely cordial reception and delivered his most eloquent address here. He spoke for two hours and a half.

Hon. T. W. Palmer, in introducing the distinguished visitor, referred to the old tale of the shield that was copper on one side and silver on the other and the contest which ensued. If we look



on both sides of a question there would be less dispute. It is impossible for all men to agree. The matter of foreign missions has been dear to the religious heart. Vivekananda, from the Christian standpoint, said Mr. Palmer, was a pagan. It would be pleasant to hear from a gentleman who spoke about the copper side of the shield.

Vivekananda was received with great applause. He said he did not know much about missionaries in Japan and China, but he was well posted about India. The people of this country look upon India as a vast waste, with many jungles and a few civilized Englishmen. India is half as large as the United States and there are 300,000,000 people. Many stories are related which he has become tired of denying. The crocodiles cannot live except in stagnant waters; the Ganges has a swift current and the speaker never saw a crocodile in that river. So much for the baby and the crocodile stories. The manners of the people of India were described in an interesting way. The first invaders of India, the Aryans, did not try to exterminate the population of India as the Christians have done when they went into a new land, but the endeavour was made to elevate persons of brutish habits. The Hindoo is disgusted with those people of his own country who do not bathe and who eat dead animals. The speaker would not associate intimately with the Pathan because their bodies are like menageries. The different classes and their habits were described at length by Vivekananda. In Southern India the land is populated by the lower classes. These people were civilized to an extent by those who dwell in the north, but they have nevertheless retained many of their old habits. According to Hindu law no cousins may marry. In the south uncles used to marry nieces. The northern people have not tried to force their customs on the southerners, but the latter gradually adopted many of the ways of the former class. In southernmost portions of India there are a few persons who are Christians and who have been so for thousand of years. The Spaniards came to Ceylon with Christianity. The Spaniards thought their God commanded them to kill and murder and to tear down heathen temples. The Buddhists had a tooth a foot long which belonged to their prophet and the Spaniards threw it into the sea, killed a few thousand persons and converted a few scores. The Portuguese came into Western India. The Hindoos have





a belief in the trinity and had a temple dedicated to their sacred belief. The invaders looked at the temple and said it was a creation of the devil, and so they brought to bear upon the wonderful structure their cannons and destroyed a portion of it. But the invaders were driven out of the country by the enraged population. The alleged early missionaries tried to get hold of land, and in this effort to secure a foothold by force they killed about 100,000 people and converted a number. Some of them became Christians to save their lives. Ninety-nine per cent of the Christians converted by the Portuguese sword were compelled to do so, and they said: "We do not believe in Christianity, but we are forced to call ourselves Christians." Catholic Christianity soon relapsed.

The East India Company got possession of a part of India with the idea of making hay while the sun shone. Squeezing was their motive. They kept the missionaries away. The Hindoos were the first to bid the missionaries welcome, not the Englishmen, who were engaged in trade. The speaker paid a high tribute to some of the first missionaries of the later period who were true servants of Jesus and did not vilify the people or spread vile falsehoods about them. They were gentle, kindly men. When Englishmen became masters of India, the missionary enterprise began to become stagnant, a condition which characterizes the missionary efforts in India today. Dr. Long, an early missionary, stood by the people. He translated a Hindoo drama describing the evils perpetrated in India by invaders and what was the result? He was placed in jail by the English. Such missionaries were of benefit to the country, but they have passed away. The Suez Canal opened up a number of evils. The Englishman says of the Hindoo: "You are really native!" Now goes the missionary, a married man, who is hampered because he is married. The missionary knows nothing about the people, he cannot speak the language, so he invariably settles in the little white colony. He is forced to this because he is married. Were he not married, he could go among the people and sleep on the ground if necessary. So he goes to India to seek company for his wife and children. He stays among the English-speaking people. The great heart of India is to-day absolutely untouched by missionary effort. Most of the missionaries are incompetent; he had not met a single missionary who understood Sanscrit and so a man absolutely ignorant of the people and their traditions tries to get into sympathy



with them. Without intending to offend, the speaker said that the Christians sent men as missionaries who were not persons of ability. It is sad to see the money spent to make converts when no real results of a satisfactory nature are reached.

Those who are converted are the few who make a sort of living by hanging around the missionaries. The converts who are not kept in service in India cease to be converts. That is about the entire matter in a nutshell. As to the way of converting, it is absolutely absurd. The money the missionaries bring is acceptable. The colleges founded by the missionaries are all right so far as the education is concerned, but with religion it is different. The Hindoo is acute; he takes the bait but he avoids the hook. It is wonderful how tolerant the people are. A missionary once said: "that is the worst of the whole business. People who are self-complacent can never be converted."

The speaker referred to the lady missionaries. They go into certain houses, get four shillings a month, teach them something of the Bible and show them how to knit. The girls of India will never be converted. Atheism and scepticism at home is what is pushing the missionary into other lands. When he came into this country he was surprised to meet so many liberal men and women. After the Parliament of religions a great Presbyterian paper came out and gave Vivekananda the benefit of a scathing article. This the editor called enthusiasm. He spoke of Christian murders as the result of enthusiasm. On another page of the paper is the description of the murder of a missionary and this is not attributed to heathen enthusiasm. About missionary doctors, they do no good because they are not in touch with the people. The missionaries do not and cannot throw off nationality—they are not broad enough—and so they accomplish nothing in the way of converting, although they may have a nice sociable time among themselves. India requires help from Christ; but not from anti-christ: these men are not Christlike. They do not act like Christ: they are married and come over and settle down comfortably and make a fair livelihood. Christ and his disciples would accomplish much good in India, just as did many of the Hindoo saints, but these men are not of that sacred character. The Hindoo would welcome the Christ of the Christians gladly, because His life was holy and beautiful, but they cannot and will not receive the narrow utterances of the ignorant,



the world is full of believing men. Men are different. If they were all the same, the world would decrease. If there were not different religions, no religion would survive. The Christian requires his selfish religion; the Hindoo needs his own creed. All religions have struggled against one another for years. Those which were founded on a book still stand. Why could not the Christians convert the Jew? Why could they not make the Persians Christians? Why not so with the Mahomedans? Why cannot any impression be made upon China and Japan? The Baptists, the first missionary mission, number double the number of converts of any other religion, and they did not use the sword. The Mahomedans used the most violence. They number the least of the three great missionary religions. The Mahomedans have had their day. Every day you read of Christian nations acquiring land by bloodshed. What missionaries preach against this? Why should the most bloodthirsty nations exalt an alleged religion which is not the religion of Christ? The Jews and the Arabs were the fathers of Christianity, and how have they been persecuted by Christians? The Christians have been weighed in the balance in India and have been found wanting. The speaker did not mean to be unkind, but he wanted to show Christians how they looked in other eyes. The missionaries who preach the burning pit are regarded with horror. The Mahomedans rolled wave after wave over India waving the sword and to-day where are they? The farthest that all religions can see is the existence of a spiritual entity. So no religion can teach beyond this point. In every religion there is the essential truth and the non-essential casket in which this jewel lies. The believing in the Jewish book or the Hindoo book is non-essential. Circumstances change; the receptacle is different; but the central truth remains. The essentials being the same, the educated people of every community retain the essentials. If you ask a Christian what his essentials are, he should reply: "The teachings of Lord Jesus." Much of the rest is nonsense. But the non-sensical part is right; it forms the receptacle. The shell of the oyster is not attractive, but the pearls are within. The Hindoo will never attack the life of Jesus; he reverences the Sermon on the Mount. But how many Christians know or have heard of the teachings of the Hindoo holy men? They remain in a fool's paradise. Before a small fraction of the world is converted,



Christianity will be divided into many creeds. That is the law of nature. Why take a single instrument from the great religious orchestra of the earth? Let the grand symphony go on. Be pure, urged the speaker; give up superstition and see the wonderful harmony of nature. Superstition gets the better of religion. All the religions are good, since the essentials are the same. Each man should have the perfect exercise of his individuality, but these individualities form a perfect whole. This marvelous condition is already in existence. Each creed has something to add to the wonderful structure.

The speaker pitied the Hindoo who did not see the beauty in Jesus Christ's Character. He pitied the Christians who did not reverence the Hindoo Christ. The more a man sees of himself the less he sees of his neighbours. Those that go about converting who are very busy saving the souls of others in many instances forget their own souls. The speaker was asked by a lady why the women of India were not more elevated. It is in a great degree owing to the barbarous invaders through different ages, it is partly due to the people of India themselves. Here the speaker satirized the women of this country who are devotees of novels and balls. Where is the spirituality one would expect in a country which is so boastful of its civilization? The speaker had not found it. "Here" and "hereafter" are words to frighten children. It is all "here." To live and move in God; even here; even in this body. All self should go out; all superstition should be banished. Such men live in India. Where are such in this country? Your preachers speak against "dreamers." The people of this country would be better off if there were more "dreamers." If a man followed literally the instruction of his Lord here he would be called a fanatic. There is a good deal of difference between dreaming and the brag of the nineteenth century. The bees look for the flowers; open the lotus. The whole world is full of God and not of sin. Let us help each other. Let us love each other. A beautiful prayer of the Buddhist is: I bow down to all the saints; I bow down to all the prophets; I bow down to all holy men and women all over the world.

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"Vivekananda Panchakam"

[Translated from the Original Tamil.]

Hail ! to thy blessed name. Hail ! to this land of thy birth. Whence dost thou come, O ! Blissful Spirit ? The celestials sing high the praise of this world which by thy advent, they say, has become the highest of all worlds. Dost thou come from the regions of the Great God who holds the discus in His hand, or dost thou come from the abode of Shiva, or hast thou forsaken the Tapoloka to come into this world of ours ? . . . . . (1)

Was it to teach men the majesty of Divine Love, and make them love their fellow-men, or was it to raise us by showing us the path of manliness and virtue or was it to dispel the darkness of ignorance and lead mankind to perpetual life by preaching unto them the eternal wisdom of Vedantic thought, that you chose to take birth in this world of sorrows ? . . . . . (2)

The land of Bharatha was at the point of losing her former glory, is it the purpose of your advent to give her back her former place among the nations ; or have you come, O ! Revered Guru, to proclaim to mankind the necessity of rising above vain knowledge to reach the Absolute Truth, which transcends intellect and reason ? . . . . . (3)

Since the time of your coming, the Lamp of Wisdom has steadily spread its lustre to the furthest corners of the world ; the land of Bharatha has once more become the best of all lands, for she it is who holds in her hands that Glorious Lamp of Wisdom. For twice twenty years you lived in our midst. Alas, so short was your stay ; and so small was our merit to get into our hands a peerless treasure and lose it soon after . . . . . (4)

O ! Prince of renunciation how is it that the whole world has become your kith and kin ? Have you not chosen to renounce even those who were near and dear to you ? Naught did you care for the tinsel of fame and power ; but these too have followed your footsteps. Full well do we realise the import of the wise words of the Tamil poet who said, The Wealth of benign Love is the highest of all wealth." . . . . . (5)

\* The original poem appears in the current issue of the " Sri Ramakrishna Vijayam," the Tamil Vedantic Monthly and Literary Review published by the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.



By *Suami Prabhavananda*.

Sri Krishna says in the Gita that work we must. It is the nature of human beings to work. Life means activity. Our desires, our impulses, our attachments force us to engage ourselves in work. For whatever we think, we desire, we do, are not lost, but they leave impressions in our mind-stuff, and these impressions rise up to the conscious mind and we are made to work like slaves. And the secret also has been told by the Lord, the secret of work, following which, instead of creating new bondages of life, we can free ourselves from *Karma*. It is not by giving up *Karma*, it is not by giving up activity that we become free from the bondages of *Karma*. That secret of attaining freedom is through work, as has been taught by the Lord, but with the right attitude of worship. Let all our desires be consumed in that one great desire, — the desire for God-realisation. Let all our works be done, let all the duties of our life be fulfilled, but let us offer everything in worship unto the Lord. Let us not be attached to anything but the Lord. And then by doing works in that spirit of worship we come out of the meshes of work, we come out of the bondages of the world. That is the ultimate goal of life, Freedom. This freedom is attained when we realise our true Divine nature, through work with non-attachment. Once that state is reached, there is no more work for us, no more duties of life hold us. For when the purpose of life, the object of work is fulfilled, what karma can hold us down? This idea has been expressed beautifully in the following two verses.

*argumatsa*. Etc. "But the man who is devoted to the Self, and is satisfied with the self, and content in the self alone, he has no obligatory duty.

"He has no object in this world to gain by doing an action, nor does he incur any loss by non-performance of action,—nor has he need of depending on any being for any object."

Why? Because he has reached the highest, the supreme Goal of life, and all the transient objects and the transitory pleasures derivable from them are comprehended in the infinite bliss of self-knowledge.



But let us not imagine therefore that the man of self-realisation does not work at all, that he sleeps away his time. No. He also works like ordinary human beings, as has been explained in the subsequent words of Gita, only he works not like slaves, but as masters. He takes upon himself of his own free choice, the teaching of humanity. His life becomes a blessing to humanity; and he works in such a manner that following in his footsteps, we mortal beings can attain to blessed immortality.

If we study the history of religions of the world, we shall find that it is only in Vedanta Religion that this supreme Goal of life has been definitely and logically formulated; and from the standpoint of Vedanta alone, we find a rational basis and reconciliation of the various experiences of the founders of different religions.

By the way, let me tell you that Vedanta is the only religion which is not founded by any one person, nor does it depend on any personality. It is said to be the very breath of God; because it is based on eternal principles of truth. But at the same time has room for all the old prophets of the world and for all the new coming ones. Nay, further more, it seeks of us all to attain to that same height of realisation, which Krishna or Buddha or Christ had attained. And that is the realisation of oneness with the Divine. "Thou art That"; "I am Brahman"; "I and my Father are one." Each one of us has to attain to that unity with Brahman, with the Father.

We have to realise that truth for ourselves. No amount of the study of scriptures or intellectual ratiocination can give us that realisation. We have to practise in our own lives the teachings and realise for ourselves. They say, one condition must be fulfilled to verify our experiences. Our own experience, the life of the Great Masters and the recorded experiences of the scriptures:—we must see that these tally with one another. And it is a strange phenomenon that all the recorded experiences of the world in the field of spiritual culture, speak of the same ones. When we read the lives of the great mystic Christian saints, we find that they had the same experiences as the Hindu sages had. Only the explanations are put more rationally in the Vedanta, due to the fact that the Hindus had made a science of their Religion. This condition is necessary to be fulfilled, because in our journey towards the goal we may have many kinds of experience. And we must see



that our experiences tally with those recorded in the scriptures and with the experiences of the Great Masters who had trodden the path. For there is the danger that we might confuse true visions with our own imaginations or may be, the abnormal conditions of the mind.

Now to our point, such is the goal put forward by the Vedanta. And the same goal had been reached by all the prophets. But in no other religion we find the goal so definitely and logically formulated, due to the fact that the prophets were not truly understood by their respective followers.

As for example, the followers of Christ did not understand the true meaning of the words "The Kingdom of Heaven is within ;" and thought and preached that there is a sphere beyond this planet of ours, called Heaven where the believers of Christ go after death. But this idea of the supreme Goal could not satisfy the higher intellects of the people. For if it is a sphere, the same hands of time, space and causation must operate there as here; and what is limited by time, space and causation cannot be permanent nor immortal.

In Vedanta Religion also, there is an idea of such a heaven ; but that ideal is a lower ideal. It admits that that heaven is un-permanent and that one goes there to enjoy the virtuous deed done in this earth, but has to be born in other planets after the enjoyment in heaven is over.

Amongst the Western adepts, to whom the idea of heaven could not satisfy, we find the growth of another idea,—the idea of eternal progress. They say that we evolve and progress eternally. But this ideal is vague and indefinite. In other words, it is tantamount to saying that we do not know where we go, we do not know the supreme Goal of life. Then again, if we ponder a little deeply, we shall find a great fallacy involved in the theory. Our progress cannot be infinite, cannot be in a straight line. If we draw a straight line to infinite length, it will come back to the point wherefrom we began, forming a circle. Similarly in life there cannot be any progress infinitely and indefinitely.

Thus we see that the Vedantic ideal is the only ideal that is positive, definite and that stands to reason. There cannot be any more progress when we reach unity, for the highest is attained. What does science try to find out? Does not science also try to





get that one principle which can explain everything? And when that principle is reached, science must attain to the highest knowledge.

In Religion similarly when the oneness is reached, when we realise our oneness with the Absolute, the highest is reached, the *summum bonum* of life is attained.

## THE HARMONY OF RELIGIONS.

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

(Continued from page 825.)

There is a great deal of confusion of thought about what is called Intuition or Mysticism or *Yogaja Pratyaksha* or *Anubhava* or *Avagathi* or *Sakshatkara*. Principal Baird has well said : "In general, the theory of intuition, or the assertion of a knowledge above reason, may be traced to the reaction of the religious nature from the seeming incertitude, narrowness and inadequacy of rational thought." Immediacy, directness, certitude, realisation—these are the characteristics of the religious vision. There is in it what Baird calls "the transcendence of all that is finite and relative and the elevation of the finite spirit into communion with an Infinite and Absolute Spirit." It is involved in the very nature of man, is of the very texture of his inalienable being. Even now our sense of the finite implies the idea of the Infinite. If we are by nature finite how can we be conscious of the infinite? The actual communion with the divine is the raising of this vague sense of the Infinite into a definitive and supreme realisation of the Infinite. Only the Infinite can truly realise the Infinite. Such realisation is more than will or knowledge or feeling. It is the spiritual self-consciousness which realises God as all in all. That is the reason why religion is prized by every race and every man as the dearest treasure of life. Hegel has well said : "All nations know that it is the religious consciousness in which they possess the truth; and they have therefore regarded their religion or that which gives dignity and peace to their lives. . . . In religion, then, man beholds his own existence in a transfigured reflexion, in which all the divisions, all the crude lights and shadows of the world, are softened into eternal peace under the beams of a spiritual sun." Well has the poet said :



## VEDANTA KESARI

Religion (all or nothing) ! It is no mere smile  
 O contentment sign of aspiration,  
 No quality o' the finer tempered clay  
 Like its whiteness or its lightness ; rather, stuff  
 O' the very stuff, life of life and self of self ;  
 I'll tell you, men won't notice ! When they do  
 They'll understand."

Thus religion must be distinguished from morality and philosophy. It may be defined, as Matthew Arnold once described it in a famous phrase, as "morality touched by emotion." Similarly we may say that it is philosophy touched by realisation. As Baird well says : "But philosophy does not pretend to make men pious. It presupposes religion, but makes no claim to produce it. It no more aspires to create piety than ethics to create morality or aesthetics to create art." Religion is simply the return of the finite consciousness with the Infinite, the reconciliation of the human spirit with the Divine." Morality teaches us to love others as we do ourselves ; philosophy teaches us that the others are your own self ; religion makes us realise the unity which morality seeks to reach from the plane of equality and which philosophy affirms as a logical conclusion of thought. The real fulfilment of science is in ethics ; the real fulfilment of ethics is in philosophy ; the real fulfilment of philosophy is in religion ; and the real fulfilment of religion is in realisation.

Such is the relation of religion to reason. What is the relation of religion to revelation ? The idea of revelation is one of the fundamentals of the human consciousness. It is the rainbow arch that reaches from the heaven to the earth. To imagine a God who is in a relation of love to the world and who has yet not given a revelation of His nature and His commands to man is an impossibility. A famous stanza says :

यस्य संसृतिवदवस्थे आ यन्ममाद्येख कर्मभिः ।

विद्यते वाक्ये विन्धेः कृपाकासमस्तव ॥ "

Some attribute revelation to the Grace of God. Others say that revelation is of Truth which is always existent in the very constitution of things which is only taught by God to man. But we need not go into these subtleties of logical discussion. It is enough to realise and remember that revelation is the completion of human reason by the Divine Reason.



Comparative religion is an effort made to find out the greatest common measure of universal religious experience; ceremonial, hymn, prayer, myth, literature, art, philosophy and religion are the aspects that are taken up for comparison. In a famous drama, *Nathan the Wise*, brought together the representatives of three great religions for purposes of comparison:—the Christian Templar the Mussulman Saladin and the Jew Nathan. Not only have the various elements and aspects of the various religions been taken up by Comparative Religion for the purpose of comparison. Comparative philology has taken up the task of discovering the affinities of words which will surely lead to the realisation of the deeper affinities of thought and feeling. Max Muller was one of the greatest of the pioneer who worked in this direction. This is not the place for discussing and dividing about the methods and results of the new science of comparative religion aided by the sister science of comparative philology. It is enough to state here that this new science has brought into the life of the world a new toleration and a new sense of the harmony of religions. If wrongly applied, it may undermine faith by watering down each religion and diluting it out of its nature. But if rightly applied, it will intensify faith by the demonstration of the concurrence of human testimony about the divine origin and purpose and goal of the universe and by the proof of religion being of the inalienable essence of the soul as self-effulgent light is of the being of sun and star.

It may be asked why there should have come into existence so many religions in the world and why God has not given to man only one comprehensive universal religion. The answer is that just as minds are diverse, just as races are diverse, so religions also are diverse. The Indian explanation of it is *Karma Vaichitrya* (manifoldness of karma.) Different types and tastes and tendencies have existed and will exist down to the end of time. He who wants to steam-roller all of them into a macadamised road of uniformity will find his task as impossible as it is futile. Just as in the political field the task of wisdom is not the anglicisation or gallicisation or the germanisation of the world in the hypothetically proclaimed interests of peace but the establishment of a league of nations, so in the religious world the task of wisdom is the task of establishing a league of religions and of achieving an increasing spiritualisation of life among individuals and races "so that the will of God may be done on earth as it is in heaven."

To be continued.



## **SRI SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S TEACHINGS AND SOME PRESENT-DAY PROBLEMS.**

*By Arcot Swaminatha Iyer Avergal, B.A..*

I was one of the fortunate few who have had the privilege of somewhat close association with the Swamiji when he spent some time in Madras, both before he went to the Parliament of Religions at Chicago and after he returned having delivered the message of India to the modern world. Vivid recollections of those unforgettable days come rushing into my mind and it is impossible

### **INTRODUC- TION.**

not to recall even after this lapse of time, the impressive personality of the Swamiji, his magnetic presence, his silvery eloquence, his extreme alertness and dialectic skill, his ready repartee which hecklers have often found to their cost and above all his thoroughly human nature which endeared him to all. Others better fitted than myself have painted in exquisite colours the Swamiji as was seen by them. To dwell on the personal aspects of the Swami's life and teachings should be of perennial inspiration to us all. However, I feel diffident to undertake that task this evening, attractive as it is, and will content myself with discussing with you some aspects of the Swamiji's teachings in their bearing on the problems that confront us at the present day.

On this commemoration day, our thoughts naturally go forth to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa of revered memory, the great soul who has inspired this movement. So deep, so divinely mutual was their love and regard to each other, that Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda have been regarded as two souls in one. Have we not read in the life of the Swamiji, how

### **SALUTA- TIONS TO RAMA- KRISHNA PARAMA- HANSA,**

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was eagerly expecting his future disciple Naren as Swami Vivekananda then was? As star to star vibrates light, great souls are attracted to and illumine each other. And when the world discovered Swami Vivekananda it also discovered Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa through the medium of his chosen disciple, for the Paramahansa was the realisation and insight, the spirit and the stimulus and Swamiji the expression thereof. Swami Vivekananda often used to say that he had not one little word of his own to utter, not one insignificant





thought of his own to unfold. "What in me or in my words it good and true and eternal came to me from his mouth, his heart and soul" Salutations to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

The essence of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda is that all religions are true though each takes account of one aspect only, and that they are paths to the self same goal. The message which the Swami delivered in the Parliament of Religions was the message of Universal Religion to which every religion was "only a travelling, a coming-up to,"

THE  
CENTRAL  
TEACHING  
OF SRI  
RAMA-  
KRISHNA  
VIVEKA-  
NANDA

through various conditions and circumstances to the same goal. His greatest message to the world was the harmony of religions, that religion is independent of the externalities of sects, creeds and social customs. India which is the home of Brahmanism, the birth-place of Buddhism, the refuge of Zoroastrianism and which has played the host to Islam and Christianity has rightly therefore taken upon herself the role of teacher and harmoniser. Lest she forget her mission, she has been afforded the opportunity to practise her teachings within her own borders. "We must win all the religions in India to live side by side with mutual respect and toleration. Let it be the work of everyone to live his own religion and to love the religions of other peoples." Help and not fight, assimilate and not destroy, harmony and peace and not discussion—that was the gospel which the Swami preached. Hinduism is the synthesis of all religions and within its wide arms all the creeds and faiths of the World are welcome. It excludes none, but harmonises all, sympathises with all. Its watchword is "peace and not fight, love and not hatred, co-operation and not disintegration."

India in the past was the scene of invasions. One race after another come to this country in search of gold, but when something better than material gold was found, the races apparently lost their zest for it and were content to remain with us. They conquered us by their disciplined armies but were in turn vanquished by our thought; and this process accounts for so many diverse races and religions existing side by side, and if it has been

HINDU  
MUSLIM  
DIFFER-  
ENCES.

possible for these races and religion to live and thrive in harmony, it has been due to the divine influence of Hinduism. When the British Government pledged



self to promote absolute tolerance in religious matters, it took its stand on the fundamental rock of respect for the ideal set before the world by the all-inclusive Hinduism. To the extent to which the Government invariably keeps before itself the ideal, to that extent will success be vouchsafed. But a great responsibility rests on the people also. The ideals are often forgotten and we have witnessed insensibly differences between the two great communities—Hindus and Muhammadans. To compose the Hindu-Moslem difference has now become the most pressing problem of the hour. Fortunately, there are cultured and refined men and women in both the communities and it is up to them to devise ways and means of placing upon unshakeable foundations the coping stone of lasting friendship which will be for the good of both. Providence has thrown the two communities together and they have to live and prosper together. We have therefore to school ourselves in self-restraint and discipline our minds and hearts in order to appreciate all that is best in our cultures and civilisations so that both of us may come to feel the pride and the privilege of living on terms of good will towards each other and co-operate for the common good of both. My appeal to the men and women of both the communities is even if we have to differ, let us not quarrel and part. There is so much work ahead which we cannot do singly, but which in co-operation with each other we can achieve easily for our common good. Distrust for each other shall no longer keep us apart. We are rapidly passing from the stage of tutelage to that of responsible self-Government and great changes are at work. There is need for mutual understanding and knowledge to fully appreciate the points of view of each other. Our differences such as they are have to be examined and tested in a spirit of good will. Each of us can and should find it possible to concede to the other the vital points necessary for our life and growth as communities, consigning to the dust-heap the unessential differences. Let us pray that Islam the apostle of Universal Brotherhood and Hinduism the great reconciler may join hands in friendly embrace.

*To be continued.*



## NEWS AND REPORTS.

### *Vivekananda Birthday Celebrations.*

#### MADRAS.

The sixty-second Birthday Anniversary of Srimath Swami Vivekananda was celebrated with great fervour and devotion in the monastery here. The devotees and admirers of Swamiji flocked from all parts of the town from early morn. The beautiful enlargement of the Master was tastefully decorated and kept in a most prominent part of the hall Bhajana parties were singing the praises of the Lord. More than three thousands poor Natayanas were fed in honour of the occasion. In the afternoon at 2 o' clock Brahmasri Duraiswami Iyer kept the whole house of devotees engaged with his Harikatha performance. At 5 o' clock M. R. Ry., Arcot Swaminatha Iyer, Retired Deputy Collector spoke on 'Sri Swami Vivekananda's teachings and some present-day problems, with Sir A. P. Patro in the chair. The lecture, a full report of which will appear in this magazine, was well appreciated. In his concluding speech Sir Parasuram paid a very worthy tribute to the memory of the great Swami. In words full of feeling, devotion and veneration the chairman, who had the privilege of moving closely with the Swamiji gave out some of his personal reminiscences which were well appreciated by the audience. After this Srman V. Narayana Satna, M.A., M.L., read a paper on 'Swami Vivekananda and South India,' with the Hon'ble C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, in the chair. The lecture was a very instructive one and the concluding words of the chairman were worthy of the occasion. After *Arathi* and the distribution of prasada the function of the day came to a close.

#### BELUR.

The Head-quarters of the Ramakrishna Mission presented a unique sight this year on the 28th January. The day was the Thirtieth Purnima of the great Swamiji. The opening ceremony of the memorial temple was an important item of the day's proceedings. There was a big gathering of over ten thousand people to witness the function. There were grand pujas, bhajanas and kirtanas and sumptuous feeding of the poor. Some young men who have



renounced the world entered the sacred order of Brhamacharyam, after due homa ceremonies.

#### BOMBAY.

Under the auspices of the Western India Vivekananda Society, a public meeting was held on Sunday evening in the Marwadi Vidyalya Hall to celebrate the 62nd Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. Mr. K. Natarajan presided and there was a large gathering of ladies and gentlemen. After the presidents introductory remarks, Swami Viswananda of the Ramakrishna Mission Asram, spoke on the life and teachings of the Swamiji.

Then Messrs. G. B. Trivedi and M. A. Narayana Iyengar, Dr. Rajabali Patel and J. B. Wadia spoke appreciative words in honour of the occasion. The president wound up the proceedings in a few well-chosen words with a vote of thanks to the chair the meeting terminated.

#### SANTA CRUZ.

The sixty-second Birthday of Sri Swami Vivekananda was celebrated with great enthusiasm at Santa Cruz, the newly started centre of the Mission in Bombay. A big portrait of Swamiji, tastefully decorated, was placed in the central part of the spacious terrace of the Ashram building. The assembled guests were entertained with Bhajanam for an hour by one Parsee musician. Then followed Pravachanam in Marathi by Mr. Dhurandhar. Mr. M. A. Narayan Iyengar, of Bangalore read some of the inspired utterances and sayings of the Swamiji and kept the audience spell-bound for half-an-hour. About a hundred guests were sumptuously fed. A public meeting was held in the afternoon at the Marwadi Vidyalya Hall in Bombay with Mr. K. Natarajan in the chair.

The Birthday Anniversary was also celebrated in the following places. Sri Shanti Ashram, Totapalli Hills, Madanapalli, Kuala Lumpur, Karur, Tindivanam, and Ramakrishna Asram, Basavangudi, Bangalore.

#### Swamies Saswathananda and Asokananda.

Swami Saswathananda and Asokananda have been touring in Southern India for the past one month and a half for populari-





ing the message of Vedanta. Through their arduous work and the sympathy of our kind-hearted countrymen, the Vedanta Kesari, and Ramakrishna Vijayam are getting numerous new friends and subscribers. We offer our new friends a hearty welcome and send them forth our greetings. The swamis are also giving lectures and discourses whenever they are approached for the same by people who are eager to hear about on national ideals of Sanatana Dharma.

#### **Swami Kamaleswarananda at the Bishop's College, Calcutta.**

Swami Kamaleswarananda of the Belur Math is at present in charge of the Gadadhar Asram, a branch of the mother institution at Bhowanipore, Calcutta. He is now holding there regular classes on the Gita and the Upanishads. His lucid presentation of the Vedantic truths is attracting a number of sincere students among whom Rev. Mr. Pelly, Professor of the Bishop's College, Calcutta.

The Swami was invited to be present at the Bishop's College where the students enacted a drama the story of Yama and Nachiketas in the famous Katha Upanishad. Mr. Pelly invited the Swami to perform the Yajna ceremony forming an important part of the play. In the course of the play when Nachiketa asked Yama for his second boon and wanted to know about the exact of worshipping the "Divine Fire" the occasion arose for Swami Kamaleswarananda to appear on the stage and perform the Yajna ceremony. The Swami took with him all the materials necessary for the purpose, and did his part exceedingly well, to the admiration of all present. The ceremony being over the play went on and was brought to a successful close.

Then came the turn of the Swami to deliver a short address on the Hindu religious symbolism and significance of sacrifice and worship. The lecture lasted half an hour. The Swami first spoke of the two aspects of Brahman—the relative and the absolute and said that the ultimate object of all was to merge in the absolute, non-qualified Brahman by transcending the limitations of name and form. But to attain to this it was necessary for the aspirant to pass through certain preliminary stages, when symbols, sacrifices and worship proved to be of great help to him. That was why they had been introduced into the spiritual culture of the



## VEDANTA KESARI

The beginner was to proceed step by step on his way to the realisation of the supreme spirit as the inmost soul of all things he saw around him, such a vision was sure to enable him to give up the gross physical aspect of objects, and gradually lead him on to a state when he would go beyond the limits of time, space and causation—the basis of the world-dream, and thus be one with the Paramatman.

The lecture brought a new light to many unacquainted with the inner significance of the religion of the Vedas and was much appreciated by the audience.

### In Memoriam.

We are extremely grieved to learn about the passing away on the 7th December last of Sri Jut Akshay Kumar Sen, one of the most devoted householder disciples of Sri. Ramakrishna. The deceased had a great poetic genius, and was the author of the celebrated work "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Punthi"—an elaborate biography of Sri Ramakrishna in verse.—Sri Jut Akshay Kumar has now entered the abode of Eternal Peace, but his immortal work will ever continue to help us in understanding the divine life and teachings of the Prophet of Dakshineswar, and also to inspire us in our spiritual striving and endeavour.

### The Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna.

The *tithi* of Sri Ramakrishna's nativity falls this year on Friday, the 7th March, 1924. The public celebration in the Math, Mylapore, will be on 9th March. Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar, B. A., M. D. has kindly consented to deliver a lecture on 'The Message of Sri Ramakrishna' in English and Sriman N. Subramania Iyer Teacher (and former pupil) Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home will speak in Tamil on "Sri Ramakrishna and his sayings". Brahman Swaminatha Iyer of Puraswalkam will entertain the devotees with a *Harikatha* Kalakshepam on "Jaya Deva Charitram."







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what purpose? For the realization of religious truth. Thus the ritual of the Advaitins posits the truth of Advaitavada and is designed as a means for the realization by the worshipper of non-dual truth, which here means Fact.

All religions teach the most Desirable End to be the approach to God, and the linking together of man and God, in some way or another. All are agreed that this end can only be achieved by a self-perfectioning. For the pure alone can unite with and know the Pure. There is therefore transformation with its implied conversion. Real knowledge of a thing is, according to Advaitavada to be that thing. "To know Brahman is to be Brahman." Man can only be, or as others would say, approach to, Brahman either by a divinisation of his nature into Deity, or as these others would say, by such a self-purification as will enable him to know, in varying degree, the nature of Deity. But how is this divinisation, or whatever we may call it, to be achieved in fact, and not merely talked about? That is the practical question to which Ritual addresses itself. It is thus of first importance, notwithstanding some uncomprehending and superficial modern criticism. How does it work? What is the psychology of ritual? That is another of several questions into which I do not intend to enter at this stage. This may be better taken up later, after we have first learnt what the Ritual in fact is.

I purpose then in this and following numbers of this Journal to give an account of leading Tantrik Rituals of the Shakta Sampradaya basing myself ordinarily on the Tantioktantiyapujapaddhati of Shri Jagannohana Tarkalankara Kulavadhutacharyya whose commentary on the Mahanirvana Tantra I have used in my translation of the Text. This Paddhati is the third part of the Sanatanadharmanushthanam. To its summarised Text I have made additions of my own.

One naturally commences with the early morning rites (Pratahkritya) not only because they come first in the day, but also because, without first performing the Pratahkritya the Sadhaka is not competent for the Sandhya rite.

The main directions are first given and numbered, and then the details and commentary on both.

(1) Rising before the dawn, sit up on the bed in Padmasana or Svastikasana.



According to some Tantras the Pratahkriya should be said immediately on rising, according to others after rising and changing clothes, and yet again according to others, after answering natural calls. All accounts agree that the morning rite should be done on waking from sleep at dawn, and the apparent discrepancies are harmonized by holding that the Pratahkriya should be done after waking, sitting on the bed, but that if there is such a call, it should be first answered, and then the clothes changed before the performance of this ritual. If, by chance, the Sadhaka does not rise before dawn, the lapsed rites should be done even at sunrise for the reasons already stated, the Sadhaka doing penance by ten japas of the Paduka or Guru Mantra. (See Vol. I of my Tantrik texts P. 29.)

(2) The Sadhaka then meditates on his Guru, who is the terrestrial image of Shiva-Shakti, the Guru of all.

The Dhyana, or meditation, is given as follows:—

The Guru is seated on Hangsa Bija (See Kalicharana's Commentary on Shatchakranirupana, s. 43) within the orb of a full moon, himself fair as the autumnal moon. He is on the twelve-petalled lotus (See Author's "Serpent Power") blooming downward-turned (all the Lotuses are so, until roused in Kundalini Yoga, when they turn upwards) within the downward-turned Sahasrara Padma. He is calm of feature, white, with white garlands, adorned with white ornaments and unguented. He is two-armed, making the Vara and Abhaya Mudras. He is embraced by the right hand of the Shakti who is his wife and who sits on his left thigh. She is two-eyed, red-coloured, holds a red lotus in her left hand, and is like Paramashiva.

Other Dhyanas are given in the Tantras. The following is from the Shyamarahasya:—"He (the Guru) is like a pure crystal. He is clad in clean silk, perfumed and unguented. He is calm and compassionate of feature, with a gentle smile. He makes the Vara and Abhaya Mudras (which grant blessings and destroy fear, for fear is the mark of a Pashu.) He is decked with white ornaments. His Shakti, sitting on his left thigh embraces him with her right hand. She is brilliant red, holding a lotus. She is exceedingly fair to look at, with her two lotus-like eyes beaming with the joy of supreme bliss.

There are other Dhyanas, such as that in Nilā Tantra. In all Dhyanas it is necessary to learn first the key-features, and then the



details, as to which there may be small variances, will come to mind. In the Guru Dhyana, the key features are:—the soft whiteness of the Guru, his abode, his kindly graciousness, his Mudras, the redness of Shakti and her exceeding beauty sitting on the left thigh of, and embracing her, Husband. Redness is of Vimarsha Shakti (*lauhityam etasya sarvasya vimarshah*: See my Introduction to Vol. I of Tantraraja and the Kamakalavilasa Vol. X of my Tantrik Texts.)

This Sadguru is Brahma-bliss and the grantor of such bliss. He (for the terrestrial guru is the image of the celestial Guru) is Consciousness, non-dual, above all opposites (*dvandva*) one, eternal, motionless, beyond all Bhava and Guna, all pervading like the Ether. He is the object at which the Mahavakya points *tat tvam asi*. The Sadhaka makes himself one with his own guru, and through such union, with the Supreme Guru. The Guru may be a woman according to the Tantras, and in fact is often so. In that case the Dhyana is as follows:—Meditate on Guru in the Sahasrara as Shiva, gracious and compassionate of look, whose eyes are like the petals of a full-blown lotus, whose breasts are full and firm, and whose waist is slender. She is clad in red, wears red bracelets and anklets and earrings, and is asplendent as a ruby. She sits on the left thigh of her husband and makes the gestures of blessing and assurance of safety.

Whilst the Dhyana is being done, the right hand is placed on the left and the two on the lap, in the case of a male Devata, and in the case of a Devi, such as Tara, the left hand is placed on the right.

(3) Thus meditating, the Sadhaka, if he has received the initiation called Purnabhisheka, says the Shri Paduka, and then “I worship Guru Shri (such and such) Anandanatha.” In other cases the Sadhaka takes the Guru's name.

(4) Then follows mental worship.

Worship is outer or exterior, with bodily act; or inner or mental with mental act, the latter being higher than the former. Thus in outer worship, actual flowers are offered, in mental worship first mental flowers in the form of a picture of the material flowers, and then the idea of a flower, whether actual or mental, is let slip, and “flower” stands for the offering of good qualities. In the ritual which next follows, he offers mental upachara with the





mantras of the five Bhutas which constitute himself and all that is. A Sadhaka who has received Purnabhisheka says the Paduka mantra and others the Mantra "Aing". Then follows :-

"Lang (Bija of Prithivi), I offer to Shri Guru with Shakti perfume that is Earth, Obeisance. (Joins thumbs with little fingers of both hands,

"Hang" (Bija of Akasha), I offer to Shri Guru with Shakti, flower that is space. Obeisance. (Joins forefingers with thumbs),

"Yang" (Bija of Vayu), I offer to Shri Guru with Shakti, incense, that is Air. Obeisance. (Joins middle fingers with thumbs)

"Rang" (Bija of Agni), I offer to Shri Guru with Shakti, light, that is fire. Obeisance. (Joins ring fingers and thumbs)

"Vang" (Bija of Water), I offer to Shri Guru with Shakti, Naivedya which is nectar. Obeisance. (With joined palms)

"Aing" to Shri Guru with Shakti, I offer betel that is all that there is. Obeisance.

Japa is than done, either of Shri Paduka or of "Aing" if the Sadhaka has not received Purnabhisheka. The Japa is offered with the Mantra, "Thou art the keeper of the most secret of secrets." Bow with the Mantra "Obeisance to that Shri Guru by whom has been shown the Feet of Him who pervades the Universe shaped as a sphere, made of things moving and unmoving.

Obeisance to that Shri Guru who opens the eyes blinded by the darkness of ignorance with the collyrium stick of knowledge.

Obeisance to that Shri Guru who is a form of the Ishtadevata and whose ambrosial speech destroys the poison of the wandering (Sangsara) in the worlds of birth and death.

The Mantra for women gurus is :—"Obeisance to the Shri Guru who grants Brahmahood, Vishnuhood and Shivahood, spiritual knowlege and liberation whilst living."

(4) Recite then the Hymn to Guru. The following Hymn is taken from the Kubjika (that is Kundalini) Tantra. The Sadhaka should, when reciting, face north east. In the Tantra cited, it is said, that one who does not recite the Hymn to Guru at the commencement of Kulachara Puja,—his worship is ineffectual and no better than Abhichara Puja which his everywhere condemned as it is magic which is done maliciously to hurt others.



The following is the Hymn to Guru :—

Om. Obeisance to Thee who art teacher of the great Mantra who art Shiva, who dost reveal Brahma-knowledge, and who dost save from sorrows of Sangsara.

Obeisance to Thee who art calm, heroic (vira), divine, and dispeller of ignorance, who art the Lord of Kula, and the granter of Kulinahood in Kulachara.

Obeisance to Thee, the Guru, in whom Shivatattva is revealed and who thyself reveals Brahmatattva, and assures safety to Sadhakas.

Obeisance, Obeisance to Thee who awakens knowledge of what should and what should not be done, who art the cause of all Bhava, and who yet dost grant liberation which is free from both Bhava and Abhava.

Obeisance to Thee who art Shambhu and who dost reveal Divyabhava. (One of the three Bhavas—pashu, vira, divya.)

Obeisance to Thee who art Consciousness and Bliss, who art Greatness itself, who art Shiva, the Lord of Shakti, who is the embodiment of Being, Consciousness and Bliss, who is in the form of desire, (Kama) who is desire, who is the science of the play of desire.

Obeisance to Thee who dost instruct in Kula Puja, who art Kulachara, who dost appear with that red Shakti of thine on thy left.

Obeisance be unto Thee who art Mahesha, Obeisance, Obeisance. The Hymn to a woman guru is as follows :

Om. Obeisance to Thee who art the mistress of great Devas.

Obeisance to Thee who art worshipped by Hara.

Obeisance, Obeisance to Thee who art Brahma-knowledge itself.

Obeisance, obeisance to Thee who with the collyrium stick of knowledge dost open the eyes of him who is blinded by the darkness of ignorance.

Obeisance, obeisance ever to Thee who frees from the bonds of existence, who dost grant knowledge and liberation, who art Mother and Supreme.

Obeisance, obeisance to Thee who dost sit on the left of the Lord of Shri, who art compassionate and the giver of knowledge, adored by the Suras.



Obeisance, obeisance ever to Thee, the Devi who in the great thousand-petalled lotus art Thyself Unbroken Joy, and the grantor of Mahanirvana.

Obeisance, obeisance to Thee who art, Brahma, Vishnu and in the form of three Gunas.

Obeisance, obeisance even to Thee who art Moon, Sun and Fire (that is, the three Bindus, the collectivity of which is Kamakala. See Author's Garland of Letters, Ch. 25), whose eyes roll intoxicated with bliss (and therefore unconscious of the world) who art embracing thy Lord. Obeisance to Thee, Shri Guru, the giver of Brahmahood, Vishnuhood and Shivahood, knowledge and liberation whilst living.

This Hymn is taken from the Matrikabhedha Tantra.

*(To be continued).*

## ZOROASTRIANISM OF THE GATHAS.

*By B. T. Anklesaria.*

"With obeisance, I with outstretched hands do pray for this joy, the first of the all-knowing spirit beneficent, all by means of the actions of holiness, the wisdom of the good mind, whereby I may gladden the soul of the cow.

"I who may completely reach you by means of the good mind, Oh all-knowing Lord Mazda Ahura ! give unto me the rewards, due to holiness, of the material and spiritual life, whereby happiness may be given to the gladdener.

"I who weave your praise in song, You Oh Asha (Holiness), Oh Vohu Manas (Good Mind) ! with that of the peerless all-knowing Lord Mazda Ahura, you who have unfading Khshathra (Power) and Oh ever-growing Ara-maiti (Perfect Devotion) ! Do you come on invocation unto me for joy.

"I who may dedicate my soul unto 'Garô-demana' (the heaven of eternal harmony) accompanied with Vohu Manas (Good Mind), knowing the reward of actions of the all-knowing Lord Mazda Ahura. As long as I wish and I can, so long may I impart the lesson of the wish of holiness."—[Ahunavairi Gatha : Yasna 28, 1-4].



Thus sang Zarathustra, the prophet of holiness, six to nine millenia before Jesus Christ the Saviour, striking the key-note of the revelation of reason, the wisdom religion, the Daena, the "vision" containing deep spiritual truths, which was to become the basis in future of all the positive world religions, containing within it the germs of a universal religion, aiming at the union of all mankind by promulgating the simple creed of Ahura Mazda = Lord omniscient, Vohu Manas = Good Mind, Asha = Holiness and Aramaiti = Perfect Devotion.

The prayer, divinely breathed in these simple unostentatious words, was uttered with a view to propitiate the soul of the cow. (Geuscha urvanem = गौर्वाणम्) The sun entering the constellation 'gao', Taurus at the winter solstice at the time when Zarathustra lived, the expression "the soul of the 'gao'" came into usage to impart the meaning of "the spirit of the universe."

In this one of the oldest prayers uttered by human lips, the blessing most earnestly sought for is "the wisdom of the good mind" which is to be achieved by "holy actions," the rewards to be attained in this earthly temporal life as well as in the world beyond our ken, in the life spiritual, the reward of our own deeds allotted to us by Mazda Ahura in Garo Demana, the mansion of the all-knowing Lord, the spiritual abode of the soul of the holy.

Whatsoever esotericism there may be in these plain words, due to the hoary antiquity which has handed them over to us, howsoever much scholar and learner, philosopher and teacher may discuss the ambiguity underlying the words embedded in these few lines, the simple truths disseminated in them are not likely to be misinterpreted or misunderstood.

The antiquity and historic character of these, perhaps the oldest fragments of a literary treasure, are reasonably doubted by critics and seekers after truth, being, whenever written and penned on ox-hide or paper, in characters which are supposed to be Semitic in origin and deficient rather in letters, which the Aryan family of humanity possessed in common. Nay the glorious descendants of the Zoroastrian race, who founded the Sassanian dynasty and ruled for about four centuries over the Persian dominions and asserted their sway over the civilized world, having forgotten the history of the great seer have placed him two centuries before Alexander the great, a few decades of years before Gautama





**Buddha.** This anachronism of history and the confusion of names of the kings of the Kayanian dynasty with those of the Achaemenian rulers become the more glaring, when we note the connection of the Greeks with the Zoroastrian Persians of the Sassanian period who do not seem to have made even the barest mention of the Achaemenian rulers of Persia, the history of whose rise and fall, conquests and defeats was so carefully portrayed by Greek historians. It is inexplicable to find that the references to the great Achaemenian monarchs in the Old Testament, which was read by the Sassanians and even translated into Pahlavik, the language of the Sassanian period, did not open the eyes of the Sassanian *literati* to the great omission of Achaemenian history in their writings and the consequent linking of the kings of the Achaemenian dynasty with the last known personages of the Kayanian dynasty such as Vistaspa, Spentodata and Vohuman.

Zoroastrians are indebted to the researches of European savants such as Haug, Geiger, Geldner and Mills and to the great Hindu sage, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who after a keen study of the question from the standpoint of view of comparative history and of comparative philology have essayed to prove the mistake of placing Zarathustra's life and work during the period of the Achaemenian rule. Haug places Zarathustra two thousand one hundred years before Lord Jesus and the consequent separation of the Sanskrit Aryans from their brother Iranians is therefore ascribed to the same period. Tilak could prove by his astronomical theory that the Vedas were composed and sung at least 5000 years before Christ and thus paved the way for an argument advanced by the learned Zoroastrian priest and scholar Ervad Sheriarji to say that the Gathas, being contemporaneous with the Vedas, must have been in existence at the same time as the Vedas, which contain references to the personages and communities referred to in the Gathas such as Yama Vivasvat (= Yimo Vivanhusho), Mana, Hudanu, Karapan, Kavaya, Magavan, and others.

It is quite likely that future scholars will be enabled to find out the truth of Greek writers such as Plato and Hermippos who placed the advent of Zarathustra 9300 or 6500 years before Christ. It is left for a fortunate dreamer to prove what Aristotle said three centuries before Christ that "the Magi are more ancient than the Egyptians." Just at present to dare to assign such an old



age of antiquity as nine millenia B. C. is equivalent to braving the ridicule and jeers of the learned.

The historicity of the Gathic hymns can of course be proved along with their age when scholars of Assyrian, Chaldean, Egyptian and Sanskrit Aryan literature will be able to assign the correct age to the forefathers of the Eur-Aryan races and show distinctly, if possible, the migrations of the various families of the Eur-Aryan stock over the face of the globe.

In an analytical summary such as this, jotted on the spur of the moment, one cannot even briefly recount the religious ideals, the ways and manner of thinking, the social usages, the forms of adoration and worship and many other interesting items of detail.

The Gathic compilations are well-known for the great veneration to Atar, the heat energy which pervades the universe, an ideal which full many centuries have been unable to efface from the Iranian, nay Aryan mind.

The hymns are teeming with allusions to "Fire" and the blessing which are poured over humanity through the medium of "Fire." There is a historical allusion in Greek literature as early as 440 B. C. to the Mazdeans stopping the customs of burying, burning and drowning as defiling the earth and the elements.

The dualistic philosophy of belief in the eternal polarism of the universe owing to the working of the two forces of good and evil against each other, was touched upon with a master-stroke in few simple words in these sacred hymns, and ages and centuries have misinterpreted the meaning of this simple philosophy in the writings of the Hindu Rishis composed as early as almost at a time very near the writers of the Gathas down to our own times.

The grand ideal of the life-spiritual during and after material existence seems to be an item special to the Gatha hymns and rarely to be met with in such plain and emphatic terms as in the Gathas. The doctrine of future reward and punishment and the passage of the soul to the 'Vahista' or the 'achista' 'ahu', the 'best' or the 'worst' after-life in the spirit realm was already enunciated in these ancient composition very clearly before any other religious ideals came into existence.

Communities Aryan, as well as non-Aryan, developed the simple truths of this universal religion from the fundamental doctrines laid down in this small fragment of religion of antiquity handed



down to the small section of a glorious race which dominated the world for millennia and centuries, not as much by the force of arms as by the divine wisdom, the vision of vohumanas, the ideals of purity, devotion, discipline and organization which it handed down from generation to generation.

The Mazdean form of adoration, simple in its majesty, as old as the beginning of creation is depicted in the very first verse quoted at the commencement. We can well imagine from the reference to Atar in Yacna 36, 19; 34, 4; 45, 4 and 9, as well as in many other Gatha verses, such as 29, 5; 50, 8 and 5, the Zoroastrian of old praying with hands outstretched before the many natural fires which burned eternally in the original home where he dwelt, although there is no direct mention of fire having been made the sacred altar, the turning point of worship of the old Zoroastrian. There is little or no reference to temples built with hands, having been erected for the purpose of enshrining the sacred fire therein. Zarathustra, perhaps like his follower Lord Jesus the Saviour was a votary of the immortal sanctuary not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and the usage of erecting sacred shrines to receive the Holy Fire was introduced later by the Magi who formulated the creed of the religion of Zarathustra.

In spite of the misunderstanding created by learned scholars of the Iranian lore, there is no particle of doubt to say that the Zoroastrian form of marriage as instituted by the founder of the religion was a purely monogamous one; based on the ideals of love and service as witnessed in the benediction given by the holy prophet to his daughter Pouruchista and other virgins on their wedding day, preserved up-to-date in Yacna 53, 5:—

“ Words of admonition do I utter to the virgin brides and unto you the bridegrooms; and do you meditate upon this my admonition: engirdled with the Daena do you find the life of the good mind. Do you love each other with purity. May this indeed be your domestic felicity!”

This glorious precept, simple in its language, breathing purity all round the home of humanity, wherever the enjoinder of a monogamous life is acted upon and followed, written in such clear language leaves no doubt in our minds as to the later traditional stories of the holy prophet having had more than one consort, being got up through some misunderstanding.



In a statement of the legends as regards the wives of Zarathustra, I have convincingly proved the conception of the names of the two other wives of the holy prophet, his true consort having been named in the sacred hymns and a passing veiled reference having been made as to Hvogva having been chosen by the prophet as his wife.

With an earnest hope that these few lines hastily thought out and as hastily indited without books of reference by my side will enkindle a love for the study of the hidden truths of the religion of Zarathustra, I close my theme with a fervid prayer that a study of other great religions will fill up the ellipsis and missing gaps of my own religion.

## SRI SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S TEACHINGS AND SOME PRESENT-DAY PROBLEMS.

*By Arcot Swaminatha Iyer Avergal, B.A.*

Recent exhibitions of inter-communal jealousies among the Hindus have been a source of considerable pain and disgust to all true lovers of the country. Communal squabbles have assumed somewhat undue proportions quite unnecessarily. It will serve no useful purpose to go into the genesis of this unfortunate episode in the history of our community. The causes which have occasioned it

lie mostly on the surface. Should we make a fetish of INTER-COMMUNAL these differences and exalt them to the dignity of a DIFFERENCES problem? Already welcome signs are noticeable of a proper perception in dealing with inter-communal relationship. It is reasonable and proper that with the spread of education and advance of knowledge, there should be a keen desire on the part of every community to come to its own. Communities which have had the advantage of earlier start should welcome all self-expression on the part of the other communities and cheerfully divest themselves of privileges and vested interests. Let it not be overlooked that in a democratic constitution, accession to power and influence by any community is accession to responsibility. Its performance will be tested by national standards and to the extent to which it satisfies the test, it will be allowed to function.





It is undesirable that in some quarters, there is a genuine feeling that the system of Caste has served its purpose and that it must go, if the country is to progress on sound lines. There are castes in all countries in one form or another. As in the case of all human institutions, the caste system in India has tended to become rigid. Even now under the press of modern conditions, there are evident signs of the rigidity of the caste system giving way. Is its abolition the only remedy open to us? The enthusiastic social reformers with more zeal than discretion, say, "yes". May I plead in the words of Swami Vivekananda, "Do not hurry". Those who have carefully studied the structure and the constitution of Hindu society can understand that just as, "Hindu religion is a federation of many cults and cultures, suited to the varying natures and temperaments of the individuals as well as to the particular stages of intellectual, ethical, or spiritual evolution occupied by them, but all united in a common purpose, which is the realisation of Brahman or the revelation of God in men, Hindu Society is a federation of many castes or social groups each autonomous within the limit of its caste life, but all forming part of one organic whole and working together for one common purpose, namely, the perfection of the human individual in and through his social life, and the revelation of God in man, in society. In tinkering with an ancient institution which is thus broad-based on ethical and spiritual foundations, one would proceed cautiously. What is immediately required is a readjustment and a process of levelling up having regard to the economic interdependence of the several Hindu communities. If we cannot learn to live under a sense of mutual responsibility within our own ranks, we cannot hope to live in tolerance with larger communities whose civilizations and cultures are so different.

We cannot afford to waste time quarrelling over our differences. A very pressing problem is awaiting solution and it requires all our best energies. We must own with shame that we have neglected a large class of our brethren who form a sixth of our population. The treatment we give to the untouchables is a standing blot on our country and we are reaping the indirect fruit of it in the treatment we are receiving in other parts of the Empire. When

UNTOUCHABLES. we realize the great fact of the oneness of all life, that all are partakers from the one infinite source, then prejudices must go, and love reign supreme. And if love is the



fulfilling of the law, then its opposites are the direct violation of the law. Swami Vivekananda was not tired of impressing on the higher caste Hindus, the supreme duty they owed to their brethren forming the lowest stratum of society. "Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of Gods and sages have become next door neighbours to brutes? A hundred thousand men and women fired with the zeal of holiness fortified with eternal faith in the Lord and nerved to lion's courage by the sympathy for the fallen and the down-trodden should go over the length and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising, the gospel of equality." Helpfulness and good-will to our fellowmen is the highest service and it is up to every one to find ways of service, for service is the sure road to joy. As the Prophet Mohammed said, the best of men is he from whom the greatest good proceeds to God's creatures, even though they be the lowest and unclean. Have we not heard how Sri Ramakrishna Parmahansa did not scruple to perform the most menial service in the house of a pariah. Mother! he would say, "destroy the idea that I am great and that I am a Brahmin and that they are low and pariahs, for who are they but *Thou* in so many forms". So let us haste to do good. Let us begin to do one act of service every day by these unfortunate brethren, for thus is formed the habit of service. The whole world is watching us. We can no longer postpone the fulfilment of our trust. Our fitness for self-rule will be judged by our readiness to shed our privileges and work for the up-lift of the untouchables.

I have examined some of our domestic problems in the light of Swamiji's teachings and let me now with your permission pass on to consider some of the greater problems which have of late become insistent in world-politics and to that end to present a rapid survey of the conditions which now obtain and the thoughts which dominate the modern civilized nations of the world. We cannot keep ourselves in dignified isolation. To quote an old adage "No nation can live unto itself alone, lest it lose that which it hath." It may be conceded that the marvellous inventions and discoveries of science would have inaugurated the age of plenty and abolished the age of penury. We find that on the other hand the dread powers of nature which science has placed in harness are not

INDIA'S  
CONTRIBUTION  
TO  
WORLD-THOUGHT



being used to build up a true civilization but to wreck and destroy it. Each new discovery of science, every ingenious engine that has emanated from the brain of man is, as it were, born with a double curse. On the one hand, it deprives men of their livelihood and opens the flood gates of misery. On the other hand, it forces industrialised nations to fight for markets for their surplus wealth. It required a great shock like the recent war to enable scientists to realize the real implications of their inventions and discoveries. The problem of unemployment which is agitating Europe takes on a new complexion, and reveals the power of money in a sinister light. In the war for markets and a place 'in the sun,' people fight for the privilege of sending their wealth abroad. As Prof. Soddy says ; Our ancestors' wars were soon over through sheer exhaustion, but wars between industrialised nations are so terrible and prolonged because of the very factors which produce them, the ability to produce far beyond the consuming capacity of the world and the impossibility of selling the commodities. Thus the root cause of the War is the same as that of unemployment and modern poverty. What will abolish the one will abolish the other, but no solution of one part of the problem is possible without a solution for the whole.

We were told before the great war that the reason why some of the European nations combined against other European nations was to establish a world where justice and truth shall reign and shall prevail, to create a world safe for democracy and to do away with militarism and standing armies. Are the nations of the world living now in reasonable peacefulness or is there at least a prospect of it ? Europe to-day is mad with nationalism, the nationalism which largely takes the form of hatred and suspicions of other nations. The war freed her from three military despotisms of Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany but in doing so it stirred to the very depths the racial and national animosities which lie at the root of European History. Every nation on the Continent of Europe to-day mesmerised by traditions of the past, saddened by the propaganda of national hate and national ambition is thinking of the future almost exclusively in terms of its own self and of jealousy and rivalry of its neighbours. There can never be any end to war, there can be no progress towards international liberty, law of peace in the world, so long as nationalism in its extreme form holds sway. There is only one way by which the modern world can secure what it is really



seeking—peace, freedom and opportunity for individuality and these can be secured not by aggressive self-assertion but by being ready to concede to the weaker nations what the more powerful nations claim for themselves and by establishing some common institution for the adjustment of world affairs. What that organisation is going to be, whether it will be a revised League of Nations or a new association of nations, or a world Court, none can say. The present league of Nations has yet to win the confidence of very important nations in the world. It is a happy augury for the future that the Labour Party which has now come to power has placed in the forefront of its programme, the completion of the structure of the league of Nations and it is a matter for thankfulness that the party is resolved to spare no effort to give the world civilization, a common organisation which would bring people together to enable them to understand each other. The Labour party is evidently in earnest in its professions. The latest news flashed across the wires is indicative of the coming rapprochement between H. M's Govt. and France and Russia which is all to the good.

That Universal peace will come from Universal disarmament is a fond hope. If disarmament is to be carried out successfully, *moral* disarmament by which is meant the laying aside the feelings of suspicion and insecurity that are now undermining the basis of peace must precede *material* disarmament. In other words, we must produce the *will* to peace without which all efforts by legislation, arbitration, rule or otherwise, must be vain.

The enormous and growing expenditure on the naval and air forces and on other military preparations is beginning once more a competition in armaments and is depleting the resources that should be available for expenditure on education, public health and similar social and human services and is recalling the pledges of political leaders and the expectations of the world that the great war was to end war. The next war, which God forbid, would be more frightful than ever. There would be the inevitable blockade and the air raids with poison gases which would decimate whole masses of humanity.

We are really standing at cross roads in the history of the world. Modern civilization is as it were chained to a corpse. We can postulate a bond of sympathy between all members of the human race, who owe common origin and destiny and are subject





alike to disease, death and catastrophies of nature which no human power could avert. Unfortunately, people have come to devote more attention to their superficial differences and the sense of differences has done more to influence the conduct of human affairs. Nothing is more certain than that there is a psychology of the crowd ; though difficult as it may be to understand a mass of men thinking, feeling and acting under a common impulse, think, feel, and act in ways that as separate individuals they would not hope to imitate. If a nation be a person, then those tested principles of ethics which have application to the conduct of individual persons, would have also application to the conduct of nations. The same fundamental precepts, the same ruling points of view, that are considered as moral in the case of an individual, are also moral in the case of a nation. This thesis finds powerful support in the teachings of Chancellor Kent who in his commentaries on American Law wrote " States or bodies-politic are to be considered as moral persons having a public will, capable and free to do right and wrong, in as much as they are collections of individuals each of whom carries with him into the service of the community the same binding law of morality and religion which ought to control his conduct in private life."

The test of membership in a true society of nations must be like the test of membership in a society of individuals, namely, willingness and capacity to observe loyally the principles and to follow earnestly the ideals which are characteristic of civilized states. The smaller nation like the weaker or poorer individual cannot find protection in force. Law and law alone can give it the security it desires. The truth that a nation exists not for self-aggrandizement but the promotion of general good show that it may grow great, strong and rich without danger to mankind if its greatness, its strength, its wealth and its riches be used in a spirit of friendship, not hostility ; this truth should be hearkened to by nations as well as by individuals. In other words, it is essential that all civilized nations should develop each for itself what may be stated as the '*International mind*' which in the words of a recent writer may be defined as that fixed habit of thought and action which looks upon the several nations, of the civilized world as co-operating equals in promoting the progress of civilization, in developing commerce and industry and in diffusing

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science, and education throughout the world. The international mind so defined is in sharp contrast and even antagonism to that internationalism which would break down the boundaries of nations and merge all mankind regardless of difference in traditions, in law, in language, in religion and in Government, into a single and Common unit. Such internationalism, instead of being progressive would be reactionary. It would obliterate those differences which the march of progress has developed and it would seek to destroy those land-marks of civilization, which have been built up at great cost and labour. The true international mind, on the other hand makes much of the spirit, the temper and the traditions of nationality. It builds upon history and upon achievement and it appeals to the pride, the glory and the spirit of service of nations both great and small. It sees in the various civilized nations so many different facets of a single crystal each reflecting the light of civilization in its own way, and each being a necessary part of the complete and perfect stone. I cannot conceive of a higher use of the international mind for a nation's destiny than to co-operate with other nations in the common task of advancing civilization and promoting the comfort, satisfaction, and the happiness of man, in removing artificial barriers to trade and commerce, in spreading abroad the teachings of science, in making common property of the world's literature and the world's art and in holding out the hand of helpfulness to those less fortunate peoples, who have not been able to take their places at the Council Board of nations.

Just as in the Greek and Hindu philosophies, the one and the many have to be explained with reference to each other, in our modern political philosophy, an individual nation and an association of nations must be looked upon not as antagonistic but as complementary, as parts of one complete organic whole. The method of achieving this end is the method of law. The pathway to that law is provided by morals. The support both of morals and of law is to be found in public opinion and that public opinion, must be taught to know the international mind, to accept it so as to guide national action and policy in accordance with it.

In just the measure that the outlook for the immediate present seems gloomy, it is encouraging for the future, when young men of the next generation who having received the seeds we are



we have taken their place in the field of political action. All our efforts should be directed to convince the youth of all nations, to create centres of reliable information, of enlightenment and of inspiration among them and thus to light a back-fire against the conflagration of excitement and hate which we now see are felt so subtly by nations.

Truly the old Upanishadik teaching of the relation between the one and the many has again to be pressed into service for the uplift of man. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's dream was to carry ancient Indian thought to the modern world and as I started by saying this evening, Swami Vivekananda was the chosen medium to give effect to that dream. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was the heart of old India with its spiritual back-ground and Swami Vivekananda the heart of New India, representing the new asceticism, with service for humanity as its gospel, with profound faith in the emergence of a glorious to-morrow by the confluence of the old and the new ideals. On one occasion, the Swami asked, "Shall we remain passive or shall we become aggressive, as in the days of old, preaching unto the nations, the glory of the Sanatana Dharma? Shall we remain encased within the narrow confines of our own social groups, of our provincial consciousness, or shall we branch out into the thought-worlds of other peoples seeking to influence them for the benefit of humanity? "The day has come," the Swami said, "When India self-conscious, radiant and purified by suffering, would move the nations of the world; as an angel of light, love and peace. Her deathless soul quickened the decaying pulse of Europe many a time before. In the prosperity of Persia and Egypt, she laid the foundations of the Greek and Roman civilizations; through political Greece, she gave Europe Christianity and through the world-conquering Arab she is the mother of the Renaissance, of the reformation, and of the scientific and humanistic movements that followed." On another occasion, we find the Swamiji exhorting his countrymen "Let us then become conscious of our mission in the world. India is not an old nation which has outlived itself, but a young nation pulsating with hope for the future. A nation whose ideal is spirituality, can never become old and effete. She can always explore new methods of serving humanity."

The circumstance of the Swamiji himself having taken the



message of India to the U. S. A. the citadel of materialism, the dominion of gold, was significant of the coming changes in world thought. There was besides, peculiar appropriateness in it, India the birthplace of all religion, all culture, all civilisations, was alone competent to teach the ideal of the world, the ideal of the future, one, an ideal based on eternal truths which are common to all one country or race or to a particular religion or to all countries and races and for all ages. Owing to her special position in world politics, the U. S. A., has a hand in all international affairs and has, as it were, prepared a receptive atmosphere for the great spiritual truths of India. Students of history know that the U. S. A. is built up of people of various national descent from Europe, though in somewhat different proportions. It is English, Scots, Irish, French, Germans, Italians, Jews, Magyars, Romans, Greeks etc., the only different stocks being the coloured Indians and the Negroes. They profess the same Christian religion in varying forms and draw their culture from common roots. Yet it will be noticed that the service which continues in America, bring all these nations and races into contact with one another and co-operate together and blend the traditions of Europe into groups which hate and fear and distrust one another. Is it sane or able to hope that the stimulus for embarking on the great task of achieving international conciliation should come from the U.S.A.? She has already gone far in co-operation with the League of Nations in connection with the Washington Conference and officially and unofficially represented upon many of the League Commissions such as Health, Industrial, Hygiene, etc., and it requires no great effort on her part to co-operate with other human and reconstructive agencies of the League. To my mind the co-operation of the U.S.A. must in due course become inevitable by the sheer force of international gravitation. Great Britain with its intimate association with the chief aspects of the world's political history for centuries, stands midway between Europe and America. The hope of future humanity lies in the active co-operation of America and Britain, disciplined by the teaching of India, which is looking forward to take her proper place as a free and willing partner in the British Commonwealth. This is the service of India to the Modern world. Her contribution to world thought will be a real back in the temple of humanity which is going to be.

*Concluded.*





## THE HARMONY OF RELIGIONS.

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By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri B.A., B.L.

(Continued from page 865.)

If we cast our eyes over the wide domain of human evolution, we find that there have been two great and dominant aspects of the human temperament. Swami Vivekananda has shown how the Greek type is the parent of the modern European and American civilisation and how it is different from the Asiatic type. The Greek revelled in the beauty of external nature and conceived of gods as human in form and as actuated by human passions. In Asia, the sublimities of nature—Mount Kailash rolled in glory and rapt in meditation amidst lesser snow-crowned heights, saw the God Mahadeva surrounded by lesser Gods and Yogis, Ganga hastening with her white silken robe fluttering in the breeze to give health, wealth and holiness to the waiting and yearning and praying millions and a thousand other glories and wonders of nature—kindled in the mind that rapture of meditation which is termed introspection. Swami Vivekananda says in noble and stirring words: "A peak after peak of this father of mountains began to appear before my sight, all those propensities to work, the ferment that had been going on in my brain for years, seemed to get down, and instead of talking about what had been done and what was going to be done, the mind reverted to that one eternal theme which is reverberating in the very atmosphere of the place,—renunciation." He says again: "The voice of Asia has been the voice of religion," "The voice of Europe is the voice of politics." It was in Asia that all the great religions of the world were born. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, Christianity, and Islam all took birth in her sacred soil. Is it too much of a claim—to say that India has been the heart of Asia? Asia has always been fired by the vision spiritual and India was always filled the fulness of that vision. Mr. Edwin Collins says: "If the modern world owes its delight in physical beauty and much of its sense of the true in Nature and in Art to Greece; its ideal of goodness and *practically all* the spiritual elements in our thought and



feeling, our conception of holiness, and every moral characteristic of civilisation and of culture, have come to us from the Orient."

Religion seems to be as old as man on this planet. The Babylonians had a triad of gods—Anu, the lord of heaven. Bel, the lord of the earth and Ea, the god of the abyss. Anu was the god of gods. His goddess was Anatum. In the Babylonian religion were present the conceptions of sin, repentance, sacrifice and grace. there was an elaborately instituted priesthood. Superstition was rampant and man went in ceaseless fear of peril from evil spirits. The abode of the dead was called Arallu. Mr. Macculloch says: "As compared with other Oriental religions, that of Babylon had little that was mysterious or mystical....Even when religion entered the domain of magic it still retained its practical aspect and never lost itself either in dark clouds of mystery or in the splendour of unapproachable light."

What strikes us ordinarily in the Egyptian religion is animal worship. But we find in it the idea of the permanence of life, the belief in divine incarnations, and an approach to monotheism. Osiris was the supreme god. With the Egyptians, "the soul was only a double having no individuality of its own, and never able, to break its connection with its body." If the corpse was destroyed the soul would be destroyed also. This led to the practice of mummification. Karl Heckel says: "I am concerned that the deeper we enter into the study of the Egyptian religion, the clearer it is shown that the doctrine of metempsychosis was entirely foreign to the popular Egyptian religion; and that even that which single mysteries possessed of it was not inherent in the Osiris teachings, but derived from Hindu sources."

Greek religion was more or less pure anthropomorphism. Greek philosophy attained a higher place than Greek religion. It was the conquest of the Punjab by Alexander that brought the West into touch with a higher religious life. The Roman religion was but an echo of the religion of the Greeks. The Roman genius, great as it was in the realm of law and empire, was bankrupt in the realm of ideas, specially in the realm of religious ideas. It was equally lacking in myth and mystery. Mr. Macculloch says about it: "The insistence upon religion as a State affair, the externality of all its ordinances, the abstract nature of most of the gods, the lack of mythology, justify the epithet of monotonous so often



attached to the Roman faith. At the same time, it presents apart from the presence of foreign elements, an ethical purity, a reverential attitude, and a disciplinary obedience which few other religions possess to so marked a degree."

When Christianity dawned on the world after such faiths it looked like a real dawn indeed. It is of course impossible to go here in detail, into the glories of this great religion. It brought into vogue a new reverence for the human personality. We are not concerned here with the squabbles among Christian sects as to whether salvation is by faith or by works or as to rituals and the spiritual value of confession. Christianity outshone its parent faith Judaism by giving to the world a deeper tenderness, a higher ethos and a finer spirituality, while preserving the Judaic moral earnestness and love of righteousness. It gave to the Provincial Judaism a new extensiveness and a new intensiveness. Every prophet is at once a fulfilment of the past and a creator of the future. Jesus Christ declared that he came not to destroy but to fulfil. It is no doubt true that the doctrines of immanence of God, of God as the Absolute, of Karma, and of Yoga are not of the essence of Christianity. These had their highest emphasis in the Aryan conception of religion. The great emphasis of the Semitic faiths was on the conception of God as the Eternal Righteousness. But Christ added to this idea the ideas of holiness, of love, of renunciation. He realised and proclaimed:

"The Kingdom of God is within you."

"My Kingdom is not of this world."

"Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

"Thou shalt love thy Lord Thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind."

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

"I and my Father are one."

"Be ye perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect."

The idea of an eternal hell may not appeal to many. The idea of personal redemption through Christ is a matter of faith. But the ideas of repentance, prayer, renunciation, redemption and



grace are of the essence of the religious life and have a radiant fullness of emphasis in Christianity.

The later Semitic religion, Islam, emphasises brotherhood and unity. 'Islam' means resignation and submission to the divine will. Mr. Ameer Ali explains it as "striving after righteousness." Mr. Macculloch says: "Islam, the religion of Mohammed, as it sprung up among a people who had preserved and radiantly kept Semitic characteristics, has also remained faithful to Semitic religious conceptions. In nearly every case the gods of the Semites were lofty and terrible deities, before whom even man stood in awe, unlike those of the Aryan race." The Islamic Paradise has certainly a trace of earthliness about it. The Islamic hell is to receive all the non-Moslems of the earth. But the declaration of the unity and supremacy of the Godhead and His mercy stirred people as profoundly as its emphatic declaration of unity and brotherhood. Every Sura begins thus: "In the name of God, the 'Compassionate, the Merciful'." There is no sectarianism. It does not accept the need of any mediator or intercessor (Koran, VI, 62). It has emphasised the need of charity and almsgiving and prayer in an abundant and admirable manner. Von Kremer says: "Islam has largely drawn upon Judaism, Christianity, the religion of Zoroaster and possibly even from Manichæism. From Paradise it has taken both directly and indirectly." It is not possible to deal here with the various movements within Islam—the *Mahmadiya* (the *Dawaniya* etc.) but we however refer here to Sufism where, in a specially beautiful commingling of Islam and Persian mysticism and Vedantic thought, we have a realisation of God as the Eternal Beauty and Love and Grace which is both Immanence and Transcendence.

I now proceed briefly with the distinctive Arya religions in Asia which have profoundly influenced religions throughout the world. They consist in the main of the religions of the ancient dissenting brother Zoroastrianism and its older dissenting brothers—Buddhism and Jainism. In Zoroastrianism the Hindu Gods and demons are found, though in a topsy-turvy form. Perseus and sacrifice are insisted upon. Zoroaster's *Gathas* are of enduring beauty and value. According to him Ahura Mazda has five attributes—Good mind, Law and Order, Perfect Holiness, Immortality and Well-Being—and is engaged in perpetual warfare





with Angra Mainyu, the power of Evil. He thus combines monotheism and dualism. He laid the greatest emphasis on good thoughts, good words and good deeds. Fire worship was inculcated by him as fire is the emblem of God's effulgence.

Buddhism rejected the authority of the Vedas, condemned sacrifices and abolished the caste system. In this process of jettison, it threw over-board also Iswara and the complex and co-ordinated *Sadhanas* of Hinduism. Later on all these entered Buddhism by the backdoor of Mahayana. Buddha rejected God and the Buddhists made a God of him! Thus it must be admitted—however unwillingly—by Hindus and Buddhists that Buddhism brought a new intensity of ethical life and fraternal union and renunciation of worldliness to Hinduism or rather intensified these pre-existing elements; whereas Buddhism in spite of its early speculative recoil from the fundamentals of Hinduism came back to them after all. The great need in the study of religions is to strip terminology of its superficial tinsel and see the substance of the doctrine in itself. The complexities of Buddhist doctrine about the four Noble Truths, the Noble eight-fold doctrine, the twelve Nidanas, the 253 vows of a Sramana, the doctrines about Dharma Kaya, the Sawbhoga Kaya and the Nirvana Kaya, and the doctrine about Arhats, Bodhisattvas and Buddhas have their unacknowledged sources and parallels in Hinduism. Buddhism travelled to the end of Asia and also vitalised the ancient Chinese faiths of Taoism and Confucianism. The personality of Buddha is one of the noblest and the sweetest in the world. Sir Edwin Arnold has well sung of it in *The Light of Asia* thus :

“ This is that Blossom on our human tree  
Which opens in many myriad years—  
But opened, fills the world with wisdom's scent  
And Love's dropped honey.”

Jainism does not dissent from Hinduism so much as Buddhism. It also rejects the Veda and a supreme Iswara. Its insistence on *ahimsa* is its most noteworthy feature. Its emphasis on asceticism is only next in importance. Both Buddhism and Jainism accept the tenets of Karma and Nirvana. But while Buddhism denies the permanent existence of the soul and of matter, Jainism asserts their permanent existence. Buddhism and Jainism played a great part in



the literary history of South India, and we owe to them a lofty literature as well as a lofty ethics in South India.

I shall now deal briefly with Hinduism. In the case of a born Hindu, who is passionately devoted to his faith as the jewel of his soul, absolute detachment, like that of a surgeon dealing with a patient in the operation table, is neither possible nor desirable. I know also that pure-hearted men devoted to their own faiths, will appreciate the spirit of my appreciation of Hinduisim. It has been said that Hinduism is not a church but a federation of churches. It is so and therein lies its strength as well as its weakness. It does not present only a few formulae, a bundled creed, a brief ritual, an alternated and compendious philosophy to the world. It is in itself a reconciliation of various aspects, a symposium of congruent doctrines, a symphony of related interpretations of experience, a synthesis of religions. That is the very reason why it is not militantly powerful, and proselytising like other religions in the world. It has lost an intensiveness what it has gained in extensiveness. Personal intensiveness of a most rapturous and exalted kind is certainly met in its votaries in as abundant and frequent a measure as in any other religions in the world. But it has never cared for mere census victories. Its source is the Veda, just as the source of the Ganga is the Himalaya. But like the Ganga it has received its tributaries of Yamuna and Saraswathi in the shape of Agamas and Tantras and has broken up into a thousand stream bearing fertility and beauty to the regions of the Hindu racial soul. Hindu noetics have been admitted on all hands to be subtle and satisfying. The Veda itself declares its eternal and divine character.

In the Mantra and the Brahmana portions of the Vedas the means of the establishment of relations of love and harmony between men and men and between men and Gods are revealed. In the Upanishads or Vedanta the means of realisation of the supreme Iswara in all His aspects is revealed to men. The Vedangas enable us to have a correct realisation of the Vedic truths. The Shad Dharshanas form the prism refracting the Eternal White Light into its constituent splendours, so that we may be enabled by crescent realisations to realise at the end that exceeding brightness. They treat of the origin and constitution of the universe the nature and organs of knowledge, the nature of the soul, the cause of its embodied life, the nature of pleasure and pain, the moral law, the nature of



God, of bondage and liberation. The supreme and passionate aim of all of them is Mukti or Liberation which is only another name for self-realisation or God-realisation. The conception of Mukti is positive bliss and not mere negative freedom from pain. All the Dharshanas agree in declaring and demonstrating that Atman is higher than and different from the Mind and that mind is only subtle and fine matter. All of them agree in regarding knowledge as the means of liberation. Broadly speaking, the Nyaya and the Vaiseshika (logic and atomism) are realistic schools of thought. The Sankhya proclaimed the dualism of Purusha and Prakriti but did not affirm Iswara. The yoga system has included Iswara in its scope and showed how to attain self-realisation. The Purva Meemansa is devoted to the Karma Kanda. It is in the Brihad Meemansa or Uttara Meemansa or Samana Meemansa as its variously called that we find the highest synthesis of Hindu religious thought. The essential relatedness of God and soul and nature in a relation of identity or a relation of immanence and transcendence is its affirmation. I cannot discuss here the Talatinya doctrine of Dwaitism, the Samya doctrine of Visishtadwaitism and the Atkya of Adwaitism. Bitter and tempestuous controversies have raged about them. Swami Vivekananda once said well, "The Dualist and the Adwaitist meet not to fight each other, each has a place and a great place in the national life, the dualist must remain, he is as much a part and parcel of the national life as the Adwaitist, one cannot exist without the other, one is the fulfilment of the other, one is the building, the other is the top, the one the root, the other the fruit". All of them find room in themselves for Karma yoga, Bhakthi yoga, Raja yoga and Jnana yoga and thus appeal to the worker and the thinker and the man of devotion in a rich and radiant measure. Subsequent to the fall of Buddhism, the religious ideas of Hinduism were made more dynamic and popular and thus led to a resurgence of the Hindu religion. Puranic and Agamic Hinduism centred largely round Shiva and Vishnu and this vigorous growth led to the enrichment of the religious life of India as also to new controversies. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata and the Srimad Bhagavata, the Vaishnava Agamas and in South India the Prabandham began to occupy the supreme place in the faith of the Vaishnavas, almost overshadowing the Vedas. The Saiva Agamas, and in South India the Thevaram and the Thiruvachanam had the



same place in the faith of the Saivas. The Shakta Agamas had a similar place in the faith of the devotees of Devi. The Vaishnava cult is found all over India. The Saiva cult is also found all over India and especially in South India. The Devi cult is also found all over India and especially in North India. In our South India Saiva Sidhanta has of late received a new impetus and propagation almost to the point of breaking away from the Veda and proclaiming itself the supreme Hindu creed, nay, the universal creed. But all these cults have emphasised the need for Bhakti and have given to India that wonderful treasury of divine hymns and songs and poems which is at once the solace and the rapture of our life to-day. In Musulman India, Sikhism was the Hindu cult that sprang up as the result of the impact of Islam on Hinduism, modern times reformed-faiths such as Brahmoism, Arya Samaj etc., sprang up as the result of the impact of modernity on Hinduism. But throughout all these the vital power of Hinduism has been poured and it has maintained its distinctive ground unimpaired. Mr. J. E. Carpenter says: "But Hinduism still lives on with a marvellous self-renewing power." In Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda it has once again summed up its essential and vital doctrines and realisations and proclaimed them to the world.

We are now in a position to sum up the exact nature and value of the great truth of the harmony of religions. Such harmony is not that sameness of treatment which implies that they are all equally frauds and fictions. That is a contemptuous equality of treatment not a reverential equality. It goes out of court at once, nor is such harmony the assertion that all religions, all doctrines, all rituals, all ethical conceptions are equally and simultaneously and irrefragably true. It cannot be that the universe is at one and the same time, existent, non-existent, existent and non-existent, neither existent nor non-existent, likely to exist and likely not to exist, static and dynamic, unchanging and evolving (Asthi, nasthi, asthenasthi, sadasat, syad asthi, syad nasthi etc.) It cannot be that the soul is atomic and infinite (Anu and Vibhu), at one and the same time. It cannot be that the embodied soul (jiva) is eternal and created, has no past existence but only eternal future existence, and also pre-existence and future existence at one and the same time. It cannot be that there is an eternal hell and also only a temporary hell at one and the same time. God cannot at the same time be





one with the human soul, be different from the human soul, be one and yet different, have the soul as his body and as his servant at one and the same time. Thus in the realm of speculation there is the widest diversity of doctrine among the religions of the world. In fact, so far as creed and doctrine are concerned, there is not one divine voice but a regular Babe of voices.

The fact is that each religion consists of creed, ritual, mythology, symbols, worship and philosophy. These have grown up in as much diversity as the races of men. It is hence necessary for us to realise what is meant by the word "harmony." Let us take the musical scale. Harmony means a crescendo of congruent sound. No sound is of inherently greater beauty than any other sound. The lower *shadja* rises through extending notes into the *shadja* of the higher octave. Even to the lower *shadja* of simple faith in God attain the higher *shadja* of realisation of God. But in the process of transformation of God-faith into God-realisation, there has been and will be infinite permutation and combination of intervening notes. In some symphonies *rishaba* will be left, in some others *ganadhara* may be omitted. Each symphony consisting of inclusions and omissions is sweet to hear and sweet to God.

Harmony is not mere toleration, as toleration implies an attitude of indifference or of patronising superiority. It is not mere identity because identity implies an utter negation of variety. It is not mere unity, as unity implies an utter negation of all parts. Then, wherein does the harmony of religions consist? Mr. J. E. Carpenter says. "Theologies may be many but religion is one" Masnair says:

"Because He that is praised is, in fact, only one ;  
In this respect all religions are only one religion."

(To be concluded.)



## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA :

His Contribution to World Civilisation.

*By Swami Prakashananda.\**

It is our blessed privilege today to celebrate the birth-day of one of the greatest Acharyas born in this century. I want you this morning to cast away all prejudices and open your hearts and minds to study this great life, each in your own way. Though he was born in India, a life such as his could never be claimed by any one country. His life was meant for all races and all times, always for humanity.

As we study the life of our illustrious leader we see how his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, prepared him with His own hands for the world work, and through the constant association of His blessed presence transferred to him the legacy of his world message, with its irresistible urge to give itself to a spiritually starved world.

It was, as it were, the Divine Dispensation that he came across the seas to give his Universal Message through the Parliament of Religions, then being held at the World Exposition in Chicago in 1893.

There, men of all nations were brought together in a wonderful gathering for the cause of religion. All classes, all creeds were represented. By his inspiring and universal message he became the central outstanding figure in that assembly of the world's most brilliant religious intellects.

"Sisters and Brothers of America," were the opening words that fell upon the astonished and delighted ears of his hearers. Thrilled with one impulse the vast assemblage rose to the occasion and burst into tumultuous applause, then subsiding into silence, that great audience listened spell-bound to his Universal Message for humanity.

This was his introduction to the Western world. And wherever he travelled, from city to city, in every country the effect was the same. His personality was so commanding and inspiring that people everywhere were thrilled by the message he was commissioned to give. In addition he was a scholar so profound,—

\* A synopsis of the lecture delivered at the Hindu Temple, San Francisco, U. S. A.



constantly fed by the fountain of Divine Wisdom—that learned professors, and men eminent in the domain of art and science said, “He has more real learning than all the rest of us put together.”

As the years roll by, we can see how his message is making a deeper and deeper impression on the civilized world. Wherever his message is felt, you find it doing good to humanity.

You may read the story of his unique life and get glimpses of his greatness—yet in order to get the real meaning of his message, you will have to live the life; come out of the narrow realm of the orthodox limitations and religious prejudices and throw the doors of your mind and heart wide open, in order to grasp the message of his life.

Once he wrote to an American disciple: “I have no duties in my life, but I have a message. I will not Hinduize it, I will not Christianize it, but I will My-ize it.” He was determined to give his message in his own way.

During his travels through the different countries of Europe and America, he met many great men in all walks of life, and when they spoke of the glory and greatness of the civilization of their countries as compared with that of others not so fortunate, he would ask the question, “What is civilization?”

They replied. “What we are is civilization.”

He answered. “My friends, we may reach a place as a nation of great wealth, we may conquer the nations around us, we may carry art and science and even the utilitarian system of ethics to their highest point, yet we may fail to see the highest civilization manifested in a man who has conquered his self.”

He did not want false ideals exalted. Wherever we look, we can see these false ideals exalted, everywhere we will see that the real point of true civilization has been missed. In us, self-aggrandizement is civilization and we are rudely awakened from our pleasant sleep of self-hypnotism to the fact that in this self-aggrandizement the basis of even our so-called civilization is shaken again and again.

If you only take care of one dear little self you may live out an existence, but only on a very low stratum. All the higher stages of civilization come to man only by conquest of the little self.

As you try to put into practice this truth handed down by the



sages from the beginning of time, you will see that the only basis on which true civilization is founded is self-conquest.

Yet we need this so-called civilization ; we have to live, we have to eat, we have to have this or that to carry on our life according to the plane we are on ; but remember that it can never fulfil the true mission of life

Each one of us consists of three counterparts.

This body : we need so many things to keep it in comfort, food to eat, clothes to wear ; but we cannot stop these. The body is insatiable in its demands and soon becomes a devouring monster. No sooner is one thing set before it than it is devoured and it cries for more.

Intellectual side : We must train our mind and intellect. Success even in everyday life can only be attained by using the power of analysis and discrimination. Life everyday is a failure, unless we get power to discriminate between the lesser and the greater. In life how many things have been averted by the use of analysis and discrimination.

Both of these sides have their place, but beyond these is your *Self*, the true *Self* of man. To develop that, you need religious or spiritual culture. One must know oneself or become and manifest oneself. One must live the life in the spirit which one is in reality, the true *Self* of man.

You may read all the books and acquire all the knowledge in all schools and universities, yet you may remain unchanged. The true objective in spiritual culture is *man-making*. No matter where you are, or what is your race or creed, whether you are a devotee or an atheist, you are not excluded. The task remains the same. Sooner or later you consciously have to take up the work of man-making, character-building.

How can you develop and unfold true and perfect character ?

He said the perfect development was four-sided. You may develop the heart and devotional nature but might unfold sentiment with it and become irrational. Combine it with the rational to get the common-sense viewpoint. We must combine head and heart.

Another phase should be unfolded in man by balancing the active life with the power of concentration. Otherwise when we are engaged in constant activity and surrounded by many complexities of existence we are liable to lose our serenity and poise.





Character is the strongest criterion of unfoldment. Whatever your path of unfoldment the result must be character and by the quality of character developed will be judged the sincerity of your purpose.

Once the Swami wrote :

"We want persons with nerves of steel and iron will, who can stand firm even if the earth be pulverised beneath their feet." If in every community we can produce such men and women, already we have developed the true and higher civilization.

Time will not permit me to dwell more than briefly on this great life, but we can mention one or two special points.

He was not only an intellectual giant, but his heart was the heart of a prophet.

The heart of Jesus of Nazareth went out to all in need, ready to help all, never caring for any return. The Buddha also willingly sacrificed his life on the altar of the needy. And again when we come to touch *this* great life we actually see such things – not mere conjecture. Whatever he taught, he practised in his own life over and over.

Before the applause of thousands, qualities can show to advantage. How easy to work with the applause of the multitudes, but to live the life day to day, that is the test. Can you do it?

He gladly poured his life and wonderful love on the lowest classes, the poorest of the poor. To him they were truly Narayanas, all. He would make no distinctions of class, but the poor and needy were his special object of service and no sacrifice was too great on his part to uplift and help them.

Another time he wrote to one of his American disciples: "At the age of twenty-three I was a hopeless fanatic. I would not walk on the same side of the street on which was a theatre. At thirty-three I can live in the same house where public women live and feel not even the shadow of criticism in my heart. Am I going to degenerate, or am I broadening into that Universal Love which is God Himself?"

Once when he was very sick, the doctor ordered the disciples to guard his door and admit no one. A woman of the street had come a distance to see him, and pleaded with the disciple at the door to let her in. The disciple, obeying orders, told her that Swami was ill and he would have to send her away. Swami



heard her voice and told the disciple to send her in at once.

When she came in, he listened to her troubles, then gladdened her with words of spiritual instruction and sent her away happy.

He then told that disciple: "Everyone who comes to me, I *will* see. They do not come to see you, they come to see me, and I must see them." He used to say, "I believe in going to hell if it will help others."

If we can bring even a little of this spirit into our relations with others we shall most truly have served humanity. Then we will really have celebrated the birthday of such a soul.

Yet while he was one of the greatest workers for humanity, the world has ever known, his religion was always a cheerful one. He believed that if we were spiritual it should express itself in sunshine in our lives, and that for a spiritual person to be gloomy was nothing less than criminal.

A child should be taught from his childhood "Thou art the stainless One," said he again and again.

The greatest sin is to call any of God's children sinners. To use that word is derogatory to the dignity of human nature. The soul is sexless. It is the Divine substance in all of us. How can it be sinful? We are essentially the sinless One.

Even if you make mistakes don't brood too much on them. Bring in the light and the darkness will fly away. To those in all walks of life, all races, all creeds he cried again and again, "You are the children of immortality. You are not the embodiment of darkness and ignorance, you are the children of light."

And today we bring that message to you. That message will never cease but it will go on through the ages to come, joining in the stream of life, giving hope of all other prophets and sages of all ages, carrying humanity on its loving bosom to the ocean of blissful realization.

I pray to the great Teacher of Teachers who dwells in every heart to give us this morning a little of that great devotion, that great purpose, that great love for all, that we shall become blessed ourselves and be a source of blessing to others, even in this life.

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## RENAISSANCE OF THE SPIRIT.

*By Prof. T. L. Vaswani.*

Between the nations there is a Bond made before history began. The Bond of Humanity. A great Indian Teacher of our days spoke of "Family of Nations." Not a League of Big Nations to dominate 'inferior' races ! Not a Corporation of capital states ! But a Brotherhood of the Nations.

Nationality itself develops its rich meaning when it moves in an atmosphere of Humanity. And Civilisation cannot survive except in the measure, the war of the nations gives way to some comradeship for the service of the one Human Family.

The basis of such comradeship ? Not economic exploitation. Not political pacts. Not even intellectual appreciation. But something deeper. Something Spiritual. The vision of the Spiritual, of Unity, of the nations as sons of the One Humanity is not in the political activities and agitations of to-day. The Vision is wandering !

The Vision was in the heart of Krishna, of Buddha, of Jesus. Krishna was wounded with an arrow. The Doctrine of Buddha was exiled out of the land of his birth. Jesus was crucified. Voices of the Vision have been heard, witnesses to the Vision have appeared, from time to time in East and West. But the Vision is wandering.

I asked a young man if he would deny food or water to an Englishman found hungry or thirsty on the roadside. The young man's answer was an impulsive "yes." My heart was oppressed. And my thoughts moved out to him—one of the noblest sons of Modern India—Sadhu Hiranand. In Hyderabad, an Englishman lay ill. Hiranand learnt of it, and volunteered to nurse him. Before the Englishman was, Man is.



Not fit to be free,—we are told. But where, I ask, is a nation 'fit' to dominate another nation? Freedom and fitness are relative terms. In no country of the poor, the people yet come into their own. True freedom,—individual, social, national—is in the service of Humanity.

Short cuts to freedom prove long roads. Political unrest and economic misery are due to mal-adjustments. And these spring, ultimately, from causes which offend the moral and spiritual life of man. Remove the causes, and you start on the right road to freedom. Release the spiritual energies of a nation, and all other things will be added unto it. Unity, fellowship with the poor, sense of human dignity, reverence for man as man, will spring in the heart of a nation when it gives homage to a spiritual ideal. Such a nation will have patience neither with a political nor a social tyranny. India's need is a Renaissance of the Spirit, a Re-birth of Religion. New India must be permeated with the spirit of Krishna and Buddha and Christ.

A new India, a free India cannot be made with speeches on the platform, nor debates in the councils. A New India means a New Spirit, a new faith in Humanity, a new reverence for the poor, a new idealism of love.

And love's test is abnegation. Many say they love India. How many have the aspiration to abandon pleasure, money, honors, egoism in the service of India? There is a little Greek story of Demeter. Her lovely daughter Persephone is stolen by Pluto, the god of wealth; and the mother wanders in anguish in search of her girl. Many meetings, many speeches in our country! But the mother wanders in anguish. Many are the hearts stolen by Pluto or some other half-god of ambition pride or hate. O, for the Great Spirit of Love to come again to this broken, bleeding world, to lift patriotism out of regionalism, and religion out of sectarianism, and the nations and races out of hate and strife.

India will re-arise but not without the vision of her *rishis* and *sages*,—the vision of the One Self in all nations, all races, all reli-





gions. For twenty years and more have I lived in that faith. To plunge in passion and hate, is to forget that beyond the Nations is the God of all. And His Kingdom cometh not with violence

\* \* \* \*

Is the dream too fair?

A storm was blowing. A car stood near a Temple and there sat a few worshippers guarding a little light against the storm.

Over the nations, to-day, blows a storm of passion and hate and strife. O for some in every land to put friendship between the peoples. To still the secret hates. To guard the light against the storm, the Krishna. Light in the temple of the heart, the light of Love. The little light will grow. And one day the Dream will descend upon the plane of Deed.

## NEWS AND REPORTS.

### Sri Ramakrishna Birthday Celebrations.

#### MADRAS.

The Eighty-ninth Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva was celebrated at the Mylapore Math, on Sunday, the 9th March 1924. From early morning, devotees and admirers poured in from all parts of the town. The beautiful enlargement of the Master was tastefully decorated and kept in a prominent part of the hall. Bhajana parties sang the praises of the Lord. More than three thousand poor Narayanas were fed in honour of the occasion. In the afternoon at two o'clock Brahmasi Swaminatha Iyer Avl., of Purasawalkam entertained the devotees with a Harikatha Kalakshepanam on "Jayadeva Charitram." Beginning at 5 o'clock, Sriman N. Subramania Iyer Avl., B.A., delivered a lecture in Tamil on, "Sri Ramakrishna and his sayings." Full of fervour and devotion, the lecturer dealt with various incidents in the life of the Master and kept the audience spell-bound for more than an hour. The Tamil lecture was followed by a still more eloquent English lecture by Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar B.A., M.D., who took for his theme, "The message of Sri Ramakrishna." At the close of the lecture, Mr. T. V. Seshagiri



Iyer, B.A., B.L., chairman stood up and spoke on the greatness of Bharatha Varsha and the spiritual greatness of her chosen leaders. The chairman then offered prizes to two students of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home for proficiency in religious knowledge. Srimath Swami Vishuddhanandaji thanked the Chairman, the lecturer and devotees present and after *Arathi* and distribution of *prasad* the function of the day came to a close.

### BELUR.

The Eighty-ninth Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Dēva was celebrated at the Head-quarters with the usual enthusiasm and devotion. The Thithi Puja came off on the 7th March; a very large number of devotees assembled to pay their homage to the Master. On this sacred day, fifteen brahmacharies were initiated into the holy order of Sanyas by His Serene Holiness Srimath Swami Shivanandaji, the president of the mission. Nine more took the vows of brahmachariyani. The public celebration came off on the 9th. About two lakhs of devotees attended, about twenty thousand were sumptuously fed with *prasadam*. Bhajanas, Sankirtan, discourses, and musical concerts were carried on throughout the day.

The Birthday Anniversary was celebrated at all the important centres of the Mission and at several other places also. We have received reports from, the Vivekananda Ashrama, Kuala Lumpur, F. M. S., the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Santa Cruz, Bombay, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Bangalore City, Bivavangudi, Sri Ramakrishna Vivekananda Vedanta Sangam, Sivaganga, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Cheobole, Guntur Dt., Sri Ramakrishna Seva Samiti, Jorhat (Assam), Sri Shanti Ashrama, Totapalli Hills, Prattipadu P. O., Godavary Dt., Sri Ramakrishna Hermitage and Mandir, Kandal, Gudalore Road, Ootacamund, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Tindivanam S. Arcot Dt., and Sri Ramakrishna Association, Kurnool.

Christmas Day at the Hindu Temple, San Francisco,  
U. S. A.

The Secretary writes :—

You may be interested to hear of the activities of our society during the holidays just passed.



Last year at that time, our Revered Swamiji Prakashananda was travelling in India and we very much missed his influence and blessings. But this year two Swamis were with us to inspire and bless us during this holy season.

Christmas day fell on a Tuesday. We had a special service in the morning and a discourse by Swami Prakashananda, the subject being, "Birth of Christ consciousness."

The auditorium was lavishly decorated with white Chrysanthemums and green boughs, while Christmas wreaths, made from holly and red berries were hung in the windows. The Pictures of Sri Ramakrishna and Jesus were banked with flowers, while choice incense made the place prayerful and holy, as it is the custom in this country to give gifts to all our friends, the Swamis were the recipients of many and beautiful offerings from devotees, who took that opportunity of expressing their great appreciation, love and devotion for the great blessings they are receiving from the Swami's teachings.

#### Swami Vivekananda Birthday Celebrations at the Hindu Temple San Francisco, U. S. A.

The Secretary writes :—

We celebrated the birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda on February 3, this year. It was a day of solemn blessedness for us all.

At the morning service Swami Prakashananda spoke on "Swami Vivekananda's Contribution to World Civilisation." He rose to ecstatic heights in speaking of his beloved Master and the audience were thrilled and uplifted while hearing of Swami Vivekananda's greatness. A synopsis of the lecture is published elsewhere in this issue.

At eight in the evening, Swami Prabhavananda lectured on "Swami Vivekananda's Message of a Universal Religion." He dwelt on the early life of Swami Vivekananda, of his great earnestness in the search for God, even from his boyhood. How he would ask every one 'Had they seen God.' Until he met his Master Sri Ramakrishna, no answer could satisfy the yearning of his heart. Having asked of Sri Ramakrishna, 'Had he seen God?' the Master answered him with a divine touch and lo! he himself saw the Truth face to face. At the feet of Sri Ramakrishna, he









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learnt that Religion is realisation, that all religions and sects are but different paths to the one goal. Most leaders want a Universal Church but that would mean the particular one they belong to. It would be like trying to put all the animal kingdom in a bird cage : for some would not fit. The elephant for instance would have to be chopped to pieces to get in. So would it be with a Universal Religion as the churches want it. Swamiji said : Do not destroy, but help if you can. Lead them from lower truths to higher truths. There is room in the world for all kinds of beliefs and dogmas. The Religion Swami Vivekananda preached was so universal that it had room for all.

Elaborate were the floral decorations about the Master's picture and Holy Mother's, while a basket filled with the choicest blossoms was placed before Swami Vivekananda's picture.

At both the services, appropriate music was played at the Temple Organ by Mrs. L. Buraham and Mrs. F. J. Allan sang songs specially selected for the occasion. These were the translations of the Bengali songs—the favorite ones used to be sung by the Swamiji at the feet of the Master : such as "Thou art the pole-star of my life," "All that is, Thou art," "Thou hast blest me with Thy vision" "What comfort can there be?"

The auditorium was crowded to capacity, extra seats having been provided for the occasion.



# The Vedanta Kesari

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want. And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads, and believe that I am the Atman." — *Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda*.

April, 1924.

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## NOTES OF THE MONTH.

### Psychology of Yoga.

The Ultimate Reality transcends the realm of sense-perception. All religions posit that God whom all religions worship is a Super-physical Utra-mundane Being. Even in Buddhism which denies the existence of God—a personal God—there is a state of being which is called "Nirvana," which is quite different from all that can be comprehended by the mind or perceived by the TRANS-  
CENDENTAL  
NATURE  
OF  
ULTIMATE  
REALITY. senses. Another thing that all religions agree in asserting is that the destiny of man lies in realising this state. The *summum bonum* of life and freedom from all miseries of life consist in realising God or this state.

All religions begin with pessimism. Man from the very beginning of his birth feels that he is conditioned and an heir to miseries and religion preserves to him a path by which he would attain to a state that is absolutely free from the clutches of misery. In Hinduism or the Sanātana Dharma the sages declare in clear terms that they have realised that Supreme Being who is pervading



this entire universe, who is beyond all darkness, beyond all conditions and limitations, knowing whom one can transcend death and all changes of life. There is no other alternative than this.

Each religion prescribes a path to its votaries to reach this Godhead. So also Sanatana Dharma has laid out several paths. All these paths by which that Supreme Purusha can be realised are known in that one appellation, "Yoga." Yoga according to our Shastras is a method by which a man can transcend the limitations of his mind and the senses and come face to face with that

THE  
MEANING  
OF  
YOGA

Supreme Being. Yoga is explained differently in different scriptures. According to Yagnavalkya, Yoga means "Union of the individual self with the supreme soul." This word 'union' does not clearly

explain the psychological fact of this God-realisation. So Patanjali, the greatest psychologist of India, explains it with a greater psychological precision. Yoga means "cessation of mental activities, i.e., all thoughts and ideas."

In order to understand this Yoga we have to analyse the workings of the human mind. One thing that undergoes a great change in man when he evolves from the low brute plane to the higher plane of civilization and self-expansion, is consciousness and the contents of consciousness. The savage thinks of his personality as essentially consisting in his physical body, and his whole self-interest is within the limits of the physical plane.

SELF-  
EXPANSION

In this respect he is little removed from the brute, but when the same man evolves gradually to a higher plane, his mind expands with the development of his mental faculties; and with the development of his mental faculties he finds that his individuality is not confined to his little physical body but in some mysterious way is connected with the Universal Life. Now he shifts his interest from the individual self to the family, from his family to his clan, from the clan to the nation and from nation to the whole universe. So we see that the principal thing that undergoes the change in man when he goes on evolving is his consciousness and the contents of his consciousness.

Man is not satisfied with the ever-changing world. He wants something that would give him permanent peace. He can obtain this only through God-realisation. But before he takes up a God





ward course there must be world-satiety to a certain degree. In man there are two kinds of tendencies. One known as 'Pravritti' in which the general tendency of the soul is to enjoy the senses.

THE  
DAWN  
OF  
SPIRITUAL  
LIFE.

Here the mind dwells in the sense-objects. There comes a time when these sense-objects can no longer satisfy him. They cannot give him any permanent happiness because he experiences hard buffets of fate and then there comes to him a tendency to see things

outside the sense plane. He turns his gaze inwards. From the centre he comes to the circumference and reaching the limit he turns to the centre. It is something like the rise and fall of waves. The tendency of life to go back to its original source is 'Nivritti.' It begins with a tremendous pessimism. This is the beginning of spiritual awakening in man. He withdraws from the material world and begins to find out wherein lies the truth of life. Then to his mind it occurs that reality is something which is permanent, which does not change. Intuitively he comes to know that there must be something which is permanent and that is within himself. No change can be perceived without one unchangeable entity behind it. And when man feels the existence of that unchangeable Super-physical Being, then there comes to him the real craving for God. But it has been found out by analysis that we cannot realise that permanent thing, that permanent principle in our mind without transcending the changing principles. As we feel in this universe, there are two kinds of objects—one is mutable and the other immutable, one that remains the same as the reality of sky, space, etc., another a mutable reality such as clay. For example, clay is seen in lump, dust and pot forms, although the substance remains the same. Immutable Reality is Purusha, the Pure principle of consciousness and mutable reality is Prakriti or matter. We have to accept these two principles because on these is based the entire universe of our perception.

In order to understand the reality of this principle of consciousness, it is absolutely necessary that it should be perceived in its nakedness as it were, i.e., in its *kevala* state. It is very difficult to do so because the two kinds of realities are mixed up. For instance in our own personality the first thing that rises in our consciousness is the physical aspect of the being. Behind the physical plane is



PRE-  
LIMINARY  
DIS-  
CIPLINE.

the mental aspect and if we can push our analysis further, we find there is a principle of consciousness. Vedantists and even Sankhyas say that as the mind is only matter it cannot be pure consciousness. Anything that changes is matter and if it is immutable it is spirit or chaitanya. According to this definition mind is matter, because the six-fold changes are inherent in it, such as coming into existence, running its course, increasing, decreasing and going into destruction. Western philosophers take mind as spirit, but here in India it falls under the category of matter. One instance I may give in the light of current science. One of the attributes or qualities of matter according to Newton is Inertia. If matter is in motion its tendency is to be constantly in motion and, if it is at rest its tendency is to remain at rest. So is the case with the mind. Then, there is the principle of consciousness. This principle of consciousness cannot be realised unless it is clarified from the dross of matter. Matter must be completely separated from the spirit, either in the individual capacity or in the universal form. So after the physical and moral preparation, after making our mind to a certain extent free from attachment to material life our minds get the power of introspection, power to pursue the path of self-analysis or God-Realisation, i.e., all the paths that are spoken of in the name of Yoga, Bhakti, Jnana, Raja, mantra and others. For this the heart and mind must be pure. Without morality one cannot dream of realising God. One who has not given up evil actions, not restrained his senses and concentrated his mind on his own self even with his great intellectual grasp of the principle, he cannot realise God. In Pravrittimarga, if one pursues it as prescribed in our Shastras his mind gets purified. He has to perform his duties as enjoined in the Vedas with Shraddha in God. Then his mind gets purified, then one gets the capacity to follow the higher path of Yoga. For this reason Patanjali in his Astanga Yoga gives Yama and Niyama, as purely ethical creeds. In the case of Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga one has to give up with great exertion. In Bhakti Yoga, the spirit of Renunciation comes naturally. A man begins to love God and his attachment for the world falls off. Real Yoga commences only when moral and ethical purity is achieved to a certain extent.



In all these Yogas there are two aspects—Physiological and Psychological. First the senses are to be so trained as to bear the higher flights of mind. The nervous system plays an important part in the development of higher life. We can realise only through the *prasada* or kindness of the Saptadhatus, 'Dhatuprasadat Mahimānamatmanaha.' Pranas which energise the system have to be

BODILY STATES AND MENTAL CONDITIONS.	brought under control. All these physical conditions must be in harmony with the psychological conditions. If not, the result will be destruction. Although Asana and Pranayama really belong to the Hatha yoga yet they are included in Raja Yoga because the physical conditions are to be attuned to the psychological conditions. We must be able to remain in one position. Then physical energy can be brought under control. The control of Prana or the vital energy brings about a rhythmic state and when the nerves become rhythmic it is easy to get concentration. Everything in the universe undergoes three kinds of states: Inert state, vibratory state and rhythmic state. In the inert state the mind becomes dull through its own inactivity. Rhythmic mind is very active. It is only when the mind is Sattvik that it gets concentration and the power to make the mind contentless. When the nerves become Rhythmic the whole body is attuned to the nervous system. The real Yoga commences with the fourth state, i.e., Pratyahara. Raja Yoga is a perfect science of Religion. It challenges the whole world. It does not ask anybody to put faith in any doctrine or God. You can start with any object. You may take this table as your object of analysis and as you go on with your analysis you are bound to reach the highest truth, for the supreme truth is all-pervading. The science of Raja Yoga is perfectly scientific. Unless physiological conditions are in harmony with the psychological conditions, mental development cannot take place.
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A Jnani starts with the conviction mentally that matter cannot be the supreme Reality and that there is a permanent intelligent principle behind it and that it can be realised by discarding the universe. *Neti neti Atma*, not this, not this, Atman. The body and the mind idea has to be thrown off. He starts with a certain faith—*Strotavya, Mantavya, Nididhyasitavya.*" Hearing about



THE FOUR  
PATHS

the truth from the Guru and discriminating in one's own mind and mentally when one is convinced there comes meditation. Similarly in Bhakti Yoga. The devotee here starts with a certain amount of faith, that there is a God and his salvation lies in having Shraddha in Him. Shraddha will lead him to Bhakti and Bhakti to knowledge and from knowledge comes realisation. In Bhakti Yoga there are certain presuppositions. The devotee should start with the idea of God. But a Jnani tries at once to transcend the physiological and mental conditions. Naturally it requires tremendous power of mind. He is born with that power.

In Bhakti Yoga when the man proceeds slowly with faith and devotion physiological conditions change gradually. There is not at once a radical change in him. But in Raja Yoga that is not the case. The Yogi here wants to pursue with a tremendous change. So physiological aspect is more emphasised in Raja Yoga and Hatha Yoga.

The Yoga proper commences with Pratyahara and then there are Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. The first is Pratyahara—restraining of the senses from the sense-objects. The Ahara of the senses must be purified. Ahara means 'food' that which is gathered from outside. The Ahara of the eyes is sight, that of ears is sound and so on. All the sensations that we gather with our senses

THE  
GATHERING  
TOGETHER  
OF  
SCATTERED  
FORCES

are food for our mind. The mind is moulded by the food that the senses bring to it. So if the mind is to be purified from the dross of matter, the senses are to be restrained from the external objects. In Pratyahara senses are to be withdrawn from the sense-objects and unless it is done the mind cannot get the power to see what is behind it. Mind takes always an outward course. The real principle of analysis, the real unchangeable principle of our personality is behind the mind. In the case of Raja Yoga we have to give up deliberately all things, i.e., all the contents of consciousness. In Bhakti Yoga, Pratyahara means perceiving God in everything. The whole mind has to be filled up with the God idea. Every sense perception has to be tinged with the God-idea. So Pratyahara is the very first state of the spiritual life. Without Pratyahara the Yogi cannot start. Yoga means the





realisation of the Super-physical Being. He cannot be realised unless we turn our gaze from matter. Matter covers the face of the spirit. That is why we cannot see the truth. Unless Pratyahara is practised regularly one cannot reach the climax of Yoga. The sound may be there but the ears would not receive it. Pratyahara brings the senses under control.

When the senses are under control Dharana becomes very easy, fixing the mind on one object. Mind is compared to a cup and its contents with water that the cup contains. Mind is the container. When mind wants to realise the spirit it must drain off its contents in order to fix it on one object. In the case of Jnana Yoga the object of Dharana is Chit shakti. In Bhakti some conception of God that the devotee has, no matter if it is personal or impersonal. Even in the state of Dharana there remains the tendency to run out. Mind has the tendency to run always after the sense-objects. But slowly when the mind is drawn inwards to sit upon a particular object then comes Dharana state. Now begins the actual spiritual life. Hitherto it was only a discipline to control the mind. Spirituality up to this time was simply a make belief.

With Dhyana begins the real joy. When the mind sits without any fluttering, oh, the joy of it! Even five minutes of this joy will change the whole course of our life. Our pursuit after sense-object will cease. The memory of that five minute's joy will haunt us all, our whole life. One now gets a kind of foretaste of the reality i.e. God. In Dhyana also true reality does not manifest fully. There still remains some Samskaras.

MEI) Truth is not disclosed in its naked glory even in this  
TATION.

Dhyana takes one to Samadhi i.e. absorption. In the Dhyana state there still remains the difference between the object of meditation and the meditator. There is the consciousness of time, space and causation. When Dhyana becomes fully developed it becomes Samadhi or superconsciousness. When all the changes of mind cease and it is practically without any more it is dead as it



BEYOND THE REALMS OF CONSCIOUSNESS were and the principle of consciousness which illumines the mind separates itself from the mind and in that state Purusha remains in its own nature. In other states this principle or consciousness gets mixed up with the objects of thought. That is the goal of man. This goal is reached through Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi in Raja Yoga.

THE FOUR STAGES OF PROGRESS. In every Yoga there are four stages. In Jnana Yoga too the same four stages have to be gone through. The first three stages are gone through quickly by discrimination. The mind is withdrawn from the senses and the object of senses, this is what is called Nirguna Upasana. In the worship of God there is some concrete idea. In the case of Jnana Yoga he starts with the idea of negation. He negates all that comes in his consciousness. Thus denying everything he goes to Samadhi. Similary in the case of Bhakti Yoga the man starts with the idea that God is the Supreme dispenser of his fate. Without his mercy he cannot pull on. The more he hears about the glory of God the more he is attached to Him and the world slowly falls off. Going towards God his mind has to be coloured with the God-idea. This is Pratyahara in Bhakti Yoga. The more one proceeds towards God the more his mind is filled with the Knowledge of God and he cannot dissociate himself from it. This is Dharana. Then comes Dhyana. When man reaches this state real Bhakti or Para Bhakti begins. Hitherto it was only Vaidhi Bhakti. Ramanuja says when one can think of God continuously, i.e., without any break as oil poured from one vessel to another that is real Dhyana. Such a man can think of God all the hours of day and such a Bhakta takes the name of God with every breath. So his life becomes continuously coloured by one God-thought. When he proceeds further a state called Bhava Samadhi is reached, i.e., he loses himself completely in the contemplation of God. That is how Gopis of Brindavan forgot themselves at the sight of Sri Krishna. Their love had reached the Bhava state.

It is a wrong attitude to say that we can realise only through one faculty of our mind. Sometimes we say this irrationally. Through reasoning we cannot comprehend the truth. But Upasana tries to comprehend it with the development of emotion. As



reasoning understands it as Jnana, emotion will understand it as Ananda. When emotion is purified and our mind concentrated on that Supreme Being there comes a complete GOD- self-annihilation. Whatever path we may take, REALIZA- TION. ultimately all relativity will disappear ; and what we call moksha is nothing but this i.e. going beyond the conception of relative existence of life, beyond the limitations of this material world and that state can be realised by the human soul not by the human mind. Mind only can understand that there is such a state when it is purified. Real realisation comes when the principle of Intelligence transcends, comes face to face with its own reality. With Bhakti when all limitations of the sense world are gone, comes Ananda. Says Prahlada, " What attachment the worldly persons have for the worldly object may that attachment come to me for God ". Unless we give up worldly ideas, unless we withdraw our mind from the world and fix upon God we cannot realise. Through this change comes concentration and through concentration comes realisation of self. First we have to withdraw from the world, not physically but mentally. This is Pratyahara. Then comes Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

If any body says that he can enjoy the world and also see God he is in delusion. Unless we have world-satiety we have not the capacity to realise God. If any body sincerely wishes to realise God he has to begin with the relinquishment of matter. Many practise Yoga but they do not get the result, because they do not have the moral Vairagya. Let us follow the path sincerely and we must reach the Goal.

. Om Tat Sat.



## TANTRIK RITUAL.

922

(Early morning rites)

*By Arthur Avalon.*

### II

In continuance of the last article, the fifth ritual in the early morning rites is meditation on Kundalini, the name given to the Brahma-Shakti in bodies, because it is "coiled up" that is *at rest* like a sleeping serpent. For the same reason the Devi is called Kubjika. Her Dhyana is "Om. Obeisance to the Devi who, like a sleeping serpent, rests on Svayambhu Linga (around which She is coiled; and who, garmented wondrously, rejoices in the amorous (Shringara) and other Rasas; who is ever fond of Karana (wine) (See author's "Shakti and Shakta"), and who shines like millions of lightnings." With the Guru's permission awaken her by air and fire, with the Mantras Yang and Rang (Bijas of Vayu and Agni) and by the mantra Hung (See notes to Mahamirvana Tantra).

Kulakundalini is coiled round Svayambhu Linga lying within the triangle in the Muladhara lotus, like a sleeping serpent with three and a half coils. The three coils are the three Shaktis, Ichchha, Gnana and Kriya, and on the objective side the three Gunas. The half coil denotes the creative state of Shakti with Vikriti. She is Consciousness itself (*Chit svarupa*) the Ishtadevata, fine as the fibre of the lotus and is like lightning. Raise Her with Mantra Hangsah (this is the Ajapa Mantra) and by the Brahma-way unite Her with Paramashiva. Think that the two have become one and meditate on the Guru Paramashiva (as filled with Tejas by that union with the Divine Spouse) united with his red Shakti Tripurasundari (so called because Hers are the three Bindhus, lines etc., forming the Kamakala.) If the Sadhaka has received Abhishekha he should call to mind the Kulagurus as being within the lunar orb in the thousand petalled lotus. According to another account the awakening is described as "taking the mind in hand as it were a club" (that is, by Imagination and Will lead Her through each of the centres up to the Ajna). Having raised Her thus and beyond, do Tarpana or offering (with the mind) to the red Kundalini with the nectar which flows from the moon-circle in the Sahasrara, meditating on the Kulagurus who are seen





bathed in the Light issuing from Her.

These Kulagurus above mentioned are the eight Nathas, Prahladanandanatha, Sanakanandanatha, Kumarapandanatha, Vashisthanandanatha, Krodhianandanatha, Sukhanandanatha, Dhyananandanatha, Bodhanandanatha. These are meditated upon as in the Kulamukha that is the Gurusthana in Sahasrara. "It is they whose hearts are ecstatic and whose eyes roll through the drinking of the Supreme Nectar. In them all Tamas is crushed by their Kula force. They are surrounded by their disciples."

The next stage is to bring down Kundalini from the point to which She was raised to the Muladhara, Her abode. This is done. She is bathed in the nectar produced by Her union with Shiva. Let the breath expire (that is Rechaka of which Puraka and Kumbhaka have proceeded) and make obeisance to Her with the Mantra of obeisance to Ishtadevata. It is obvious that this is an imaginative process rehearsed in the mind as part of Upasana. Only in Yoga is She actually raised by the Siddha Yogi. The process and meaning of the above terms is described in the Author's "Serpent Power." Then follows the Chauraganeshanyasa or placing of mantras on the body. Japa is done of "Kring" ten times in the heart and ten times or once of other Bija mantras twice repeated, viz., the Maya Bija lying on the two eyes and ears (4) Hung on the two nostrils (2) String on the mouth (1) the Kama Bija, Kling on the navel (1) Hsauh on the genitals (1) Blung on the anus (1) Hung between the eyebrows (1). Each of the eleven bodily places are thus consecrated.

At this time Ajapajapa may be offered. Each Mantra has its (1) Rishi (2) Chhandas, (3) Devata, (4) Bija, (5) Shakti, (6) Kilaka and its (7) application or purpose for which it is used. (See Author's "Garland of Letters"). This great Ajapagayatri Mantra or Hangsa is the outward and inward breathing, done without effort by all breathing creatures. By Hang or Shiva the breath goes out, and by Sah or Shakti it is inspired. The Rishi and so forth of this Mantra are Hangsa, Avyaktagayatri, Paramahansa, Hang, Sah, So'ham, ("He I am" which is got by reversing Hangsah) and the attainment of liberation, respectively. The offering is of twenty-one thousand ajapajapas for the satisfaction of Paramatma. The body is, as always, brought in as obeisance is made to Rishi and the rest in the order above given in the head, mouth, heart, Muladhara, feet, and in all the limbs respectively.



Hangsah the Devata resides in what "goes and comes," that is out and in-breathing, but does not Himself come or go. Hangsah is therefore the great bodily function of breathing as Mantra, that is Devata.

In Shadanganyasa done with Om Hangsah, the Ajapa Bija, the method is to place the Bija in six parts of the body, changing the last vowel into six long vowels. Thus :

Om Hangsang to the heart, the Shakti which is the sun Svaha  
Om Hangsing to the head, the Shakti of which is the moon,  
Svaha

Om Hangsung to the crestlock (Shikha), the stainless Avidya  
Shakti Svaha

Om Hangsaing to the Kavacha (lit, armour, that is hands  
crossed on chest) the Maya Shakti which is pure (Nira-  
bhasa) Svaha

Om Hangsaung to the three eyes, the Shakti of sight which is  
without end Vashat.

Om Hangsah to Astra (that is the weapon mantra against  
ignorance or Avidya,) the Shakti of knowledge which is  
without end Phat.

Offering of Ajapa Mantra is made in each of the Six Centres, and in the Brahmarandhra. These are coloured (going upwards) golden yellow, coral, blue, morning sun, smoke-coloured, like a mass of lightning, camphor, and with various colours. The offering is of the letters in each of the centres to Ganesha with Gayatri, Brahma with Savitri, Vishnu with Lakshmi, Shiva with Gauri, Jivatma with Pranashakti, Paramatma with Maya, Guru Brahmarupa with Shakti. (For further details see Author's "Serpent Power"). After having offered Japa in this way do Japa of Hangsah one hundred and eight times. Then say "May Shri Parameshvara, the Supreme Devata be pleased with the Japa done twenty-one thousand six-hundred times." So thinking do Dhyana again as follows, "That I may be free from rebirth, I daily worship with flowers of ecstasy (Samadhi) the manifestation of the Self which, brilliant like a gem is in the Heart-Lotus in the Maya city (that is, the body) and bathes in the water of pure Mind in the river of Faith."

(6) Meditate on Isht-devata mentally. Do Japa of Ishtamantra and offer to Her the Japa. Make obeisance. Recite the hymn and Kavacha Ishtadevata. At the time of Japa do Pranayama.

(7) Then with folded hands thus pray, "Oh Thou who art



the Consciousness of the Three Worlds, the Triple Shakti and gracious Mother of the Universe, it is by Thy command alone that I rise in the morning to pursue my journey in the wandering (Sangsara) for Thy satisfaction. I know what is right (Dharma) but do not turn towards it. I know what is wrong (Adharma) but will not turn from it. Oh, Controller of the senses, I do as Thou who dost reside in my heart dost direct me to do. (Thinking the Self to be one with Brahman say) I am Oh Devi none else than Thee. I am Brahman and beyond all grief. I am Being, Consciousness, Bliss whose nature is eternal freedom."

(8) Next say, "Oh Devi, girl by the sea as by a girdle, whose breasts are mountain chains, the spouse of Vishnu, I bow to Thee. Pardon the touch of my feet. Oh Devi, from Thee comes the support and sustenance of all creatures. As this is true so do Thou protect me. Remove, Oh my supporter, my bonds. (These are the Pasha which are Ghrina, Lajja, Bhaya, Shoka, Jugupsa, Kula, Shila, Jati, which bind the world).

(9) Lastly follows the going out from the house. Make obeisance to earth given by the Dear One, (Brahma the Creator) The Paddhati says that the Sadhaka should leave the house and go out putting forward the left foot first according to respiration. But this should most probably run, "putting the left foot first *or* according to respiration"; that is, if respiration is in the right nostril at the time of going out, the right foot is put forward and *vice versa*, The Mahanirvana Tantra and the Pranatoshini speak only of putting forward the left foot, and this cannot be always done so as to accord with respiration.

(10) If the Sadhaka has received Abhisheka he should here look at and make obeisance to what are called the Kula trees (Kulavriksha). The Tantrasara mentions ten, Shleshmatika, Karanja, Vilva, Ashvatta, Kadamba, Nimba, Vata, Ududumbara, Dhatri, Chinchu. The Kaulikarchhanadipika mentions Aksha, Haritaki, but not Kadamba and Dhatri. The Kantavati Tantra mentions nine, though possibly the text is imperfect, omitting the first and second and including Haritaki. These woods are also used for Homa.

The Sadhaka should also gaze at, and make obeisance to, a virgin or to his wife (Shakti). He then proceeds to answer natural calls and to make his ablutions, the Mantra used when washing the face being, "Kling Kamadeva who is dear to all."

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## PHILOSOPHY OF THE GITA.\*

*By Durga Devi.*

What the Bible is to the Christians, the Koran to the Mahomedans, the Zendavesta to the Parsees, so is the Gita to the Hindus.

It is a book comprising eighteen short chapters but containing in essence, the noblest truths, understandable by man. It deals with human life in all its phases from the lowest to the highest,—taking the young soul who is a worshipper of idols step by step to the door of the unmanifest. Holding the torch of wisdom aloft, leading the struggling soul to the ultimate goal.

So clearly, lovingly intimate, and so divinely human and tender are the Lord's teachings, that but to read with devotion this sacred book, one cannot fail to receive a great spiritual uplift and a desire to shake off all worldly appetites, take up the task of salvation in earnest, and win the great victory on the battlefield of life.

The Gita, or Song Celestial, or Lord's Song, is in the form of a dialogue between Krishna, God Incarnate, and Arjuna, his beloved disciple. It is a part of the Mahabharata and contains in a condensed form the highest and best to be found in the Vedas.

The story opens, where the old blind King Dhritashtra is being told of what was taking place on the battlefield, where his sons were giving battle to Arjuna and his brothers for their kingdom. Arjuna was one of five brothers, the Pandavas, who represented nobility, honesty, valor and skill, while his cousins, the Kurus, represented ambition, avarice, hatred, jealousy and unrighteousness.

The Pandavas through the treachery of the Kurus had lost their kingdom and had been banished exiles in the forest for twelve years. At the end of that time, having fulfilled their agreement, they returned, and, being lovers of peace, begged the Kurus to grant them out of their former vast possessions, but five small villages, one for each of the brothers, which request was refused. So the Lord Krishna himself made a loving appeal, but to no purpose. War then became inevitable.





The Lord Krishna offered his help to both parties. To one his vast armies, (for Krishna himself was a king), and to the other he offered to act as a guide and counsellor.

The Kurus, lead by Duryodhana, son of the blind King Dhritarashtra, considered themselves fortunate, in being able to choose the armies, while Arjuna, the beloved disciple of Krishna, having spiritual insight and knowing him to be the Lord of All, was happy in the thought that Krishna condescended to act as his charioteer and guide during the battle.

Arjuna had requested that his chariot be driven between the two armies, that he might better survey the opponents, arrayed against him. He was overcome with sorrow and dread as he beheld his beloved preceptors, Bhishma and Drona, both great and noble men, his cousins, comrades and friends. He knew that he would have to slay them to win the victory, and that life without them would be devoid of pleasure. Life without those whom he held dear, would bring him naught but pain and suffering, therefore, he refused to gain dominion, wealth, and ease at such a price. Sick at heart, letting fall his bow and arrow he sank upon his chariot seat and said :

“I will not fight !”

This story can be taken as an historical fact or as an allegory.

We are all born on this battlefield of the world. Our friends, our most beloved, are our sensuous appetites, our jealousies, our greed, our passions, all that gives pleasure to the senses. They stand arrayed against us, clamoring for gratification, ready to give battle and destroy us. We are told to overcome this army. At times a flash of light from our divine nature prompts us to give battle ; the spirit seems to say, “slay your foes and be free.” But we answer, “these things which you would have me slay, are really what makes life sweet and worth living : without them, I see no joy.” Thus we repeat the words of Arjuna : “I will not fight !”

When Arjuna spoke these words the Lord Krishna made reply : “How hath this weakness taken thee ? Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pritha, it doth not befit thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness, arise O terror of thy foes. Your enemies will mock you and think 'twas fear that drove you from the battlefield. They who had thought you mighty-souled, will scorn you and speak thy infamy from age to age. And infamy is worse



for a man of noble blood to bear than death."

Here the Lord was appealing to Arjuna's self-respect, his pride, to the worldly side of his character. He being by caste a warrior, it was plain that his duty was to protect his kingdom. Should he allow emotion and sentiment to keep him from battle? *That* would be sin for him.

The Lord added: "I have spoken to you so far from worldly standpoint, now hear the higher teachings of Yoga and when thou hast understood, it will save you from the bondage of your deed."

Krishna spoke of life within all living things. That which lives, lives always, death is but a change of garment. The spirit never had a beginning, would never have an end. "That which *is* can never cease to be. That which is *not*, will not exist."

"*Life* cannot by any means be diminished, stayed or changed. Weapons reach not the life, flames burn it not, waters cannot wet, nor dry winds wither it. Immortal, invisible, beyond thought and speech, thus is the Soul declared."

Then began the wonderful teachings of Karma Yoga, which if followed would break the chains that bind us. We often live with the thought of dollar for dollar, gift for gift, favor for favor, and heaven even, as payment for our good deeds. Krishna many times repeated in different ways the lesson of work without seeking reward. "Let right *deeds* be thy motive, not the rewards that come from them." He calls those that seek heaven as a reward of their good deeds, unworthy and *went* of heart, and appeals to Arjuna to rise beyond even the three qualities, doing his duty as a warrior. "Find full reward in the doing of right deeds and live in action. Make thine acts thy piety, casting all self aside, seek refuge in thy *soul*, find there thy heaven. Do not seek for happiness in your friends and relatives, but only in your own soul will peace and joy be found. And before you can *gain* that peace within, you must abandon all desires that shake the mind."

"We must abandon all desires that shake the mind."

What is it that prevents us from concentration during meditation? It is the "*desires* that shake the mind." Our mind which is being tossed to and fro like a troubled sea, by the impressions, we have consciously, or unconsciously allowed to gather



during the day, and which return to disturb us in our quiet moments, they are the links that bind us to the world. The arch-disturbers are passion, fear, and anger. These, are the three gates to destruction. Greed would come under the head of fear, fear that we may want, that our desires will not be satisfied. Anger follows a denial of our desires, and passion is perverted love. When man can abandon these desires that shake the mind, and live outside the stress of passion, fear, and anger, and can find in his soul full comfort for his soul, he has attained to Yoga. Such a one is Muni, which means a sage.

So the Lord told Arjuna to keep his mind fixed on Him. To have Him in his heart always, *that* would be the easy way to attain the mastery over himself. For if we ponder on objects of sense, there springs attraction, and from attraction grows desire; when our desires are denied, we grow angry, and when angry, we become reckless, the mind becomes confused, and we cannot discriminate right from wrong. The mind and soul of such a one is lost to himself for the time being. The *real* man is he, who lives master not slave of his lusts, free from desire, from the sin of self, free from those thoughts "that shake the mind," and rob us of the knowledge of our real self.

The soul ever shining, resplendant, is. It never grows, never dies, never is born. It is here, now, wonderful, eternal and infinite, within you, within me, within everyone. Let us abandon these desires that shake the mind, which blur that *resplendant* reflection. Can we see the bottom of a lake when it is covered with scum, and shaken by waves? Let us pray the Lord "Peace be still," on the troubled waters of our minds.

Arjuna's mind became confused because of the Lord having spoken to him from two different standpoints, and he asked of him, "If meditation be a nobler thing than action, why do you compel me to this dreadful fight?" Then was explained the wonderful mysteries of Karma Yoga and Raja Yoga, that they are the two paths, yet lead to the same goal. Karma Yoga, the path suited to a certain type, the energetic type of man, and the path of knowledge for him who is introspective by nature. Yet they cannot be followed absolutely separately, for a certain amount of spiritual knowledge is essential to do the perfect work. He who lives for himself alone, who does not help the world along, lives a lost life.



Then Krishna explained to Arjuna how he, the Lord of all, though not bound to any toil, with nothing to learn, no heights to scale, no gifts to gain, yet acted to teach the slothful and ignorant that work was a necessity. Work may be called a mild form of asceticism—the first step towards higher knowledge and concentration. An idle mind is an easy prey to the promptings of the senses, and the urge of the flesh, we are told to keep this mind occupied with definite thoughts, take hold of the reins, and be the driver and not allow ourselves to be driven headlong into greater darkness.

Nature, the kind mother who tempts and binds us, and at the same time makes us free, has made it necessary for man to work and by that *very* work which develops our intelligence, and occupies our mind, she is helping us to forget the physical, for while absorbed in work the labourer is living more or less on the mental plane and on that plane can be found ambition and attachment as the result of labour. The wise man might do the self-same work, but by being separated from results, is performing Yoga.

Arjuna seems to have covered a lifetime of experiences during that battle and inquires how, by what force, does man do evil unwillingly, as we sometimes see souls struggling against a craving for strong drink. The higher self sees the terrible results, and yet men are *dragged* as by a *chain* to repeat their mistakes. It is Karma. Strong desires which push him. It is the unresting foe of wisdom. Even the wise are caught in it. It will ever be thus, for *that* is the world. It is *we* who must study and understand. It is *we* who must withdraw our minds. How many would willingly place their hands on a buzz saw? Yet more dangerous is this buzz saw of the world of desires, and we should learn that all pleasures are but the play of Maya and will fade away, giving place to grief and remorse. The wise man knows, *even* before suffering the consequences that he has been led by desire to evil ways, and therefore he feels *ever* miserable. Desire is a constant *enemy* of the wise, *not* so of the ignorant, for the latter regard desire as a friend at the time he thirsts for some sense-object, and it is only when suffering *results* from it, but *not* before, that he learns the truth, that his desires, out of which he expected happiness, are but *wombs* that breed sure griefs. Therefore desire is the constant enemy of the wise alone. It is insatiable. There is no limit to its consuming power. As oil poured upon a fire does not extinguish,





but makes it flame up higher, so gratification of desire does not kill it, but feeds it and it comes back to us with added strength. The great lesson given us by our teacher is to be ever watchful and kill even the thought before it has developed into desire. That is comparatively easy if we are watchful. How many times when provoked, have we not felt a wave of anger rising? If we will, we can easily stop it before it has reached the surface of our minds. We are told to avoid all things and places that could be in any way a temptation. We should be well equipped with *Viveka* and *Vairagyam*—discrimination and dispassion, before we are able to live in the world untouched by sin. For it is *difficult* to conquer desire on account of its complex and incomprehensible nature.

The senses are really our great teachers. How could we learn discrimination, if there was nothing to discriminate against? How could we cultivate honesty, if one had no occasion to be dishonest? So we have the senses clamoring, then the mind becomes conscious of this clamoring, then reason over all this is the witness, the real self, which is stronger than all, which is *master* of all, which even gives the *energy* to all these. Discrimination is needed to guide in right channels the energy we dissipate in worldly living. When we have attained to freedom, we will be given something we do not now possess. We are told that it is all here now within us. "It cometh not by observation." Senses, mind and intellect are not needed. When we get above using our energies through these channels and can turn it upon itself, as it were, *then* the mystery will be revealed.

It is a great jump from the every-day life of eating, sleeping, and earning a living, to the absolute surrender to the Lord, but we can do it. Sri Ramakrishna, Jesus, Buddha, all seemed to be hopeful of humanity. If we would but *think* "Let the spirit within *me* do the work", that would be the *surrender* to the Lord, and *that* would be working according to the Saviour's teachings. Jesus said, "Come unto me all ye who are heavy laden." He called upon humanity to surrender to him. Ramakrishna said he was like a huge raft that could carry many across this ocean of Maya if we would but surrender to Him, and Krishna said, "Take refuge in Me, leave *Vedas* and *duties*, abandon all, and fly to Me *alone*."

And how does nature teach us to do this? By giving us friends, husbands, wives, and children to love and care for. A good woman



is she who surrenders all comforts for the sake of her family. The true friend is one who will share even to his *last* possession, with the less fortunate. These are the great opportunities in life. Most of us hug too *closely* our few possessions. Where is there room in the heart for God, if it is already filled with fine dresses, dollars and automobiles? We lose a few dollars, and it is as if a part of our life was gone. Not a good condition for surrender to the Lord. We should hold *loosely* to all material things, so that when the love of God enters our hearts, these material possessions will be easily forgotten.

The Gita in simple but forceful language lays before us the responsibility of our own salvation. Let each *man* raise the *self* by the *self*. *Man* is his own best friend and worst enemy. There is indeed *no other friend* that can lead us to liberation, from this *samsara* of the world. No one can save us but ourselves. No amount of belief, text torturing, lip worship, churches, or saviours can save us if they are followed externally, or intellectually. Not until the heart has been touched by divine love, will we be on the road. And how will we acquire that love of God? By first loving those nearest to us, and expanding, until like Buddha, we would gladly give our life even for an animal. How can we love God whom we have not seen, when we do not love our neighbour whom we see? Krishna says that is true piety which reaches out to remove heartaches and ills from the world. Not in a day or a month can we become wise, or loving, but each day, we can try to image God within all living things. In the flowers, the trees, man and beast, there is but *one life* flowing through all. As we have heard so often he who *tries* fails, he who *never tries* never fails, "Therefore, there is great glory in failure at times, for at least the effort has been made. "No heart that holds *one* right desire, treadeth the road to loss." That should be a great comfort, for few people are without, "one right desire" and out of that *seed* of righteousness, liberation will come. It will depend upon the individual how soon. Of many thousand mortals one will strive earnestly for truth and of those few that strive and rise high, one only here and there will know the Lord as he is. The task before each one of us has never been presented as an *easy* one. No weakling may hope to attain to it. Only one, *strong* of heart and *selfless*. Simple words but it takes lives of struggle to attain



to that state. No one else will do it for us. No one else *can*. And the wise will start this very day.

After having instructed Arjuna in the Yoga of Work, Krishna began the higher instruction of the Yoga of Knowledge. He called it "the *farthest*, secret of my heaven and earth, the *deepest concealed*, which but to know, shall set thee free from ills, the *king of secrets*." Of all the *purifiers*, this knowledge of Brahman is the best. It reduces all Karma to ashes in an instant, *root and all*. All the Karma that has been accumulated through thousands of births, is reduced to ashes. When once attained, it is *imperishable*. Ours *forever*, nay, we have *become* IT.

"By me all this *world* is pervaded, my *form* being visible to the senses. In me of unmanifest form, live all beings down to the plant. As the mighty wind moving everywhere rests ever in Akasa, so know thou that all things rest in me. *Fools* disregard me, clad in human form, not knowing my higher being as the Great Lord of All. Not knowing that I am the Supreme Self. I am like Akasa, more intimately connected with things than *even* Akasa. That I am the Great God, the *very* self of all beings. Then by ignoring *me* continually these poor creatures are ruined. They *cherish* false hopes, they see no self beyond the body, and engage in cruel deeds, their rule of conduct being cut, break, devour, and rob others' property, while the Great Souls, my *Bhaktas*, worship me with steady mind, as the imperishable source of all. They always speak of *me* their Lord, *firm* in their vows. They *worship* me in love. *Me who am their very soul lying in the heart*.

"I, am the Father of this world, the mother. I am the knowable, the purifier, I am the goal, the sustainer, the Lord, the witness, the abode, the shelter, and the friend, the origin, dissolution and stay, the treasure house, and the seed *imperishable*. I give heat, I hold back and send forth *rain*. I am the *immortality* of the gods, as well as the *death* of mortals. I am existence, and non-existence. I am alike to all. I am *like* fire. Just as fire does not *warm* those at a distance, but gives comfort to those who go near it, so I *bestow* my grace on my devotees, not on others. Those who *worship* Me the Lord with devotion are in Me. In them also I am."



How often did Krishna repeat to Arjuna the necessity of love, devotion and worship of Him. How very close He was to all beings, again and again. He gives the same thought in various ways. Always impressing Arjuna with His *omnipresence*. "There is no end to my heavenly glories. I stand sustaining this whole world by one part of myself." Arjuna then begged the Lord to show him His Universal form. And because Arjuna was dear to the Lord, He gave him divine power, and Arjuna beheld a sight that filled him with awe. Every being seemed to have been melted into one form, thousands of hands, mouths, eyes, no end or beginning. A mass of splendour shining everywhere, very hard to look at, and blazing like the sun, immeasurable. The Moon and Sun like two eyes and like a burning fire was the radiance of His face. Filled with terror at the greatness of it all, Arjuna begged the Lord to resume the form he knew and loved of old, and asked that he would once again disguise himself as his charioteer and friend. The Lord replied, "Because I loved thee well, I gave thee sight divine." Not by study of Vedas nor by sacrifice, nor by gifts giving, nor by severe austerities, can I be seen in this form, in the world of men. The gods ever long to behold this form, but it is only by *fullest* service, perfect Faith, and utmost surrender, am I seen and known, and entered into. You, my friend, who doeth all for me, who findeth me in all, who adoring always, loving all that I have made, for *love's* sole end, were worthy of beholding Me as I really am in the fullness of My glory.

Then spake Krishna of the Gunas, the three qualities, Sattva Rajas and Tamas, that everything came under these three heads. Foods which increase life, give energy, strength and health, joy and cheerfulness, were *sattvic*. Foods bitter and sour, saline, excessively hot, dry and burning, are liked by the Rajasic, causing pain and disease. The food which is stale and impure are liked by the Tamasic people. Then there were three kinds of worship. That worship is *Sattvic*, which is offered to the Lord, prompted by love and devotion, without hope of reward. When reward is looked for or for ostentation, that worship is Rajasic. When worship is devoid of faith, it becomes Tamasic.

The highest end of life is attained when we pass beyond the Gunas. Arjuna asked, "Oh Lord, by what marks is he known who has passed beyond the three Gunas?" Krishna answered, "He to





whom pleasure and pain are alike. Who dwells in the Self, to whom a clod of earth and stone and gold are one. Unto whom grief and joy sound as one word. A sojourner, a stranger in the midst of worldly activities, same in honor and dishonor, the same towards friends and enemies. Abandoning all undertakings, he is said to have passed beyond the *gunas*. "And what sort of people reach that goal?" The souls that are free from pride and delusion, with the evil of *attachment* conquered, ever dwelling in the self. Their desires having completely turned away, liberated from the pairs of opposites, known as pleasure and pain, the undeluded reach that goal eternal. There the sun illumines not, nor the moon, nor fire, that is my supreme abode, having attained which one returns no more to this world of *name* and form."

### THE HARMONY OF RELIGIONS.

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.,

(Continued from page 901.)

Thus one element in the harmony is this deep faith in God and a passion of God-love and God-realisation. Another element of harmony is in the nature of the searcher. Most religions agree in saying that he is separate from the body and is eternal and that his nature is love and bliss. The harmony of religions is the harmony of all points in the circumference by equal relation to the centre *viz.*, God. Just as we say that England, America and Switzerland are democratic states and have attained the sovereignty of the people, though the details of the democratic constitution of each may differ, even so we can say that in all essentials there is harmony of religions, though there might be infinite variations in details. All religions agree in three aspects—the ethical aspect which implies relations of love to men and animals, the devotional aspect which includes prayer, renunciation, child-like faith and simplicity and purity, and ecstasy, and the practical aspect of the realisation of God in meditation. They differ, and will differ down to the end of time, in their speculative aspects, in doctrines and rituals and symbols and philosophies. True harmony implies not only mutual toleration but also mutual forbearance, mutual non-meddlesomeness, mutual goodwill, mutual trust, mutual reverence, mutual appreciation, mutual sympathy, and mutual love. .



Let me, however, say here a few words specially applicable to our beloved and beautiful and blessed motherland. India has always been the mother of religions and the saviour of the human soul. The very dust of her soil is sacred. The first beams of the morning sun touch her loftiest peak before the light comes to lesser heights. Innumerable saints and sages and seers have lived and taught within her borders. Nay God Incarnate has come among men here from time to time and trod the land with his blessed lotus feet and made her soil the holy of holies. Burnouf says: "Now India is the country of religions, *par excellence*, its literature and sacred rites, its philosophy and religious dogmas, travel in one direction." What is this direction? Shall we ever know it and follow it aright? In every religion there is a law of sub-division that leads to the formation of sects. Religions crystallise into orthodoxies; these breed heresies; and successful heresies become sects. But again and again, new syntheses are attempted and attempted successfully. This is an indispensable work in the interests of racial self-preservation, human brotherhood, truth, and the reign of God upon earth; each race and each religion must attain such synthesis according to its essential genius. The Hindu religion attained it by emphasising a minimum of ethical and ritualistic acts, the doctrine of *Ishta Devata*, the need for meditative rapture (*Yoga*), and *Jnana* the common and indispensable elements of which are described in glorious beauty, in chapter XIII of the Bhagavad Gita. India is in a state of social and political and religious ferment to-day. Shall she realise the higher social and political and religious synthesis, the future birth of which is the cause of her travail?

The supremely important fact that we must recognise to-day is that the real war to-day is an intensive form of the age-old war of sense at war with soul. All over the world godliness is becoming less and less and worldliness is becoming more and more; the forces of religion are being overborne by the forces of materialism. It is therefore necessary that we must organise a league of religions to fight materialism as surely as we must organise a League of Nations to overthrow militarism in the world. I hope and wish and pray that Sri Sachidananda Sangha will take up this great work. Its very name is a force, a symbol, and a prophecy. I hope that you will not accuse me of exegetic pedantry when I draw your



attention to the fact that Sri implies auspiciousness and success that Sachidananda is the symbol of wisdom and bliss which is the nature of the soul and of God according to all religions, and that Sangha implies a league of purity and holiness.

Let me quote here a few lovely and holy passages before I conclude this discourse.

அங்கிக் கெனாதுபடி மொங்கும் பரகாசமா  
பானந்த ஸூர்தியாகி  
பாநொடு சீமந்ததெது தன்னாளுள் வெளிக்குறே  
யகிலாண்ட கொடியெல்லாத்  
தங்கும் படிக்கிச்சை வைத்துமீர்க் குயிராய்த்  
தவழந்ததெது பவவாக்கிலிற்  
மட்டார எரிபாறதெது சமயகீகா யுகளெவா  
தக்தெய்வ மொக்தெய்வமொ  
மெங்குக் கிதாடாந்தெதுர் வழக்கிடவு சீவந்தெது  
வெடகஜைப் பொருவழக்கா  
பாதினும் வல்லவொரு சித்தம் வண்டமா  
மொன்மை ஒரு புண்ணதெது மாற  
பஞ்சுமலா ஸாந்திமொக்தெது  
நெத்திற் கிதாடாந்தெது  
பண்டம் வெவ்வேறான புதுவெளிபுற கலமா  
புதுதியாகி கவிசெஞ்ஞவா

(Saint Thyumanavar).

सर्वगतस्यु सर्वदेशेषु स्थितमानसः  
परिस्मिन्देशव्यपदेशं प्रियाविद्वेषया संभवति ।  
यथानमनं प्रपुष्पिपरिस्मिन् दिव्यनयो  
स्वाधि पतिस्मिन्स्य परिश्यते ।  
कथापुनरपेक्षया सर्वगतः समीक्ष्यो धर्मकीका  
अयं योऽयं व्यपदिश्यते इति ।  
विचारयथा देवमिति यम ।  
एवमजीयसयादि युगययो परादेश्य सप्रदेश्य  
पुत्रिके निचारयोद्दृष्टयो व्यपदिश्यते ।  
यथाशाला ग्रामे हरिः ।  
सत्रास्यसुखिविज्जानं प्राहकं ।  
सर्वगतो ओषधर सद्योपास्य मानः प्रसीदति ॥

(Sri Sankarachariyar).



आकाशात्पतितं तोयं यथागच्छति सागरं ।

सर्वदेवनमस्कारः केशवं प्रतिगच्छति ॥

ये यथामां प्रपद्यन्ते तस्मै वै भोजाम्यहं ।

ममवत्त्वां नुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वथाः ॥ Gita, IV.

सांख्ययोगौ पृथग्वालाः प्रवृत्तिं न पंङ्गिताः ।

एकमप्यास्थितः सम्यग्बुधोर्विन्दते फलं ॥ Gita, V.

यत्सांख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।

एकं सांख्यं च योगश्चैव पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ Gita, V.

यो योषायां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धया क्षितिमिच्छति ।

तस्मात्तस्याश्रयां श्रद्धां तामेव चिन्धाम्यहं ॥ Gita, VII.

स तपाश्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमाहते ।

स भक्तेः सततः कामान्मयैव विहितान् कृतान् ॥

अनन्यारिचिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासमे ।

तेषां नित्यामि युक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहं ॥

येऽप्यन्यदेवताभक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।

तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकं ॥

अहं हि सर्वेष्वानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च ॥ Gita, IX.

यद्यद्भिन्नं निमग्नस्य श्रीमन् ज्ञेयमेव वा ।

तत्तदेवाव गच्छस्व मम तज्ज्ञोऽशंसभयं ॥ Gita, X.

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सन्निविष्टो मत्तः स्मृतिशानमपोदनं च ।

वेदैर्न प्रवेदैरदमैव वेद्योऽतिदान्तकृद्देवि देव पादं ॥ Gita, XV.

यस्यामसं तस्य मतं मतं यस्यान वेदसः ।

अविभक्तं विजानतो विजातम विजानताः (Kenopaniṣhed.)

Gentlemen, I have done. I have shown how religion is the natural seeking of the soul for its inalienable and native and natural infinite perfection. Swami Vivekananda has said well: "No search has been dearer to the human heart than that which brings to us light from God." The search has been as diverse as the diversities of racial temperament. The prism of the human mind has reflected the White Light of God into the coloured radiances of the different religions. But the splendour streaming through the prism is one and the same. The search for the Supernal Glory has been expressed in sweet and sonorous language in the Upanishad where the worshipper addresses the sun thus :

हिरण्ययेन पाश्रेयं सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखं ।

तत्त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ॥

पूषन्नकर्षे यमस्यै प्राजापत्यम्युह रश्मिन्समूह ।

तेजोवस्ते ह्यं कृष्णाय तमं तस्ते परयामियोऽसावर्सा पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि ॥





It is the ancient yet eternal declaration of religion that we hear in these thrilling verses. The soul is divine and is *Kalyanathama*. It is *चानन्दरूपममृतं यद्विभाति* । The *Swetasweta* Upanishad declares :

आराप्रशस्तभागस्य शतधा कल्पितस्य च ।

जीवोभागः सविज्ञेयः सचानन्दाय कल्पयते ॥

The real harmony of religions is in the realisation of the nature of the soul and of God and of the glorious perfection which is at once our nature and our goal. All through our life in the world we must keep our gaze unfalteringly fixed on God-love and God-realisation. The *Varahopanishad* says in noble words :—

पुंस्त्वानुपुं लविष्येद्यथा तत्परोऽपि ब्रह्मचर्योक्तमधियं न जहाति योगी ।

संगीतताम्रं ह्रमयाद्भव शङ्कतापि मौलिस्थको भवती रघुयधीर्नदीव ॥

The real brotherhood of religions is in the realisation of their common divine origin, their common effort among men, and their common goal. When such a league of religions is an accomplished fact, all rivalries among them will cease and none of them will try to become a world-wide religion at the expense of the others. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa has well said : "Different creeds are but different paths to reach the one God." The proof of the *Sadhanas* is in the attainment. Each man must hold fast to his own *Ishta Sadhana* and *Ishta Devata* in a spirit of reverent affection for the *Ishta Sadhanas* and *Ishta Devatas* of others. Hinduism claims to be a universal religion only in this new sense of containing innumerable *Sadhanas* suited to every *Adhikari* and of promising to every human being in all times and climes the promise and possibility of attainment of God at some time or other in the course of its embodied existence Swami. Vivekananda once said in eloquent words : "If there is any land on this earth that can lay claim to be the blessed *Punya Bhumi*, to be the lands to which all souls on this earth must come to account for Karma, the land to which every soul that is wending its way Godward must come to attain its last home, the land where humanity has attained its highest towards gentleness, towards generosity towards purity, towards calmness, above all, the land of introspection and of spirituality, it is India.' In God's inscrutable wisdom India has been all along His chosen workshop of the harmony of races and the



harmony of religions. In Hinduism we see the harmony of all religions and in the Bhagawad Gita we realise the harmony of all the aspects of the Hindu Religion.

(Concluded.)

## COMMENT AND CRITICISM.

### The Present State of Tamil Learning.

The outlook is dismal ; not a single college in the city of Madras carries up its Tamil teaching above the intermediate standard. English is compulsory ; the mother-tongue is not. The regulations require that all undergraduates shall at the time of their intermediate examination satisfy the examiners in vernacular composition. This, of course is easily evaded by the undergraduate who chooses to appear for the alternative paper in Sanskrit or Latin translation. There the matter ends. For the final degree examination the Bachelor-of-Arts-to-be has not to bother his head over Tamil or Sanskrit or any other *Oriental* language. The result of this pernicious state of affairs is that we are getting an "educated" class which is more or less ignorant of its mother tongue. Progressive Indian universities such as the University of Calcutta make the mother-tongue compulsory up to the final degree examination ; in addition to the mother-tongue, Sanskrit is compulsory up to the matriculation standard. The outcome of this wise policy is that every graduate of the Calcutta University is proficient in his mother-tongue and also possesses a working knowledge of Sanskrit. Consequently there is an educated Bengali-reading public which could appreciate Bengali literature and make worthy additions to it. The system also produces men who are well-versed in the sciences of the West and in those of the East. These men are qualified to interpret the modern thought of the West for the sake of their countrymen who are unacquainted with the languages of the West. Comparisons are odious, yet they are often necessary to help us to see ourselves as others see us. The writer of this note happened to be present at two lectures delivered by an Englishman who is well-known in Madras for his Tamil learning. The subject of the lectures was the Tirukkural, a widely read Tamil classic. The Englishman spoke in pure, chaste Tamil. The chairmen on both



occasions were Tamilians, college professors—professors not in a government-managed, or missionary-managed institution, but professors in an institution founded by indigenous enterprise. These professors, in rising to offer their comments on the Tamil lecture delivered by an Englishman, excused themselves for not being able to speak Tamil and went on to offer their comments in English. If it is the fostering care of the Madras University that has driven these college professors into such a shameful corner, one is tempted to say that the sooner the university closes its doors and ceases to function the better it would be for the youth of this country.

Sometime ago a public meeting was held under the presidency of a Minister of the Government for urging upon the Government and the Madras University the desirability of making the mother-tongue a compulsory subject of study for the final degree examination. Some of the speakers said that the colleges are even now ready to do higher work in Tamil, but they are unable to carry up Tamil even to the pass degree standard—not to speak of honours—simply because students are not coming forward to study Tamil, and the parents are not keen either. Here, is a charge worthy of consideration. Yet, it is not enough to say that students and parents are not as wise as they ought to be. It would be far more profitable to go into the matter a little deeper and find out why the undergraduates of the Madras University, particularly the Tamilians, are so callously indifferent towards the study of their mother-tongue. Twenty years ago, it appears that the mother-tongue was a compulsory subject of study up to the B. A. standard; then some wise person took it into his head to reform the compulsory clause and from that time onwards the number of students who offered Tamil steadily decreased and has at present dwindled into a very small number. On the face of it, the whole blame appears to rest on the head of the students. Some may be tempted to say, that the students who would not care to study their mother-tongue except under compulsion are wholly unworthy of it. Let us not judge too hastily. There are always two sides to a question; we shall endeavour to find out what part the university has played in making the students so callous towards their mother-tongue. Those of us who have had the occasion to come into close acquaintance with the student community of Madras know that the students of Madras are quite as patriotic as



other students ; they love their mother-tongue and, we daresay, are proud of the ancient culture which lies enshrined in it. Nevertheless, the University of Madras has succeeded in devising a system whereby it could slowly but surely root out of the student's heart any love which he bears towards his motherland and his mother-tongue. To make ourselves clearer, we shall proceed to compare the conditions set forth by the University of Madras on the one hand, and those set forth by liberal universities such as the universities of Calcutta and London on the other hand, as regards the subjects to be chosen by students proceeding to a degree in the faculty of Arts.

London examines her candidates for the pass degree in Arts in four different subjects : -- a classical language (Latin or Greek or Sanskrit or Pali, the two last-mentioned were recently introduced) ; an additional language, either Ancient or Modern (we may note here that Tamil has quite the same status as English) ; a science or quasi-science subject (Mathematics, Philosophy, Economics etc., are included here) ; an additional subject (another language or science or history or the Theory and Practice of Education). Candidates for the Honours degree in Arts are examined in a single subject. The Calcutta University likewise examines her candidates for the Pass degree in Arts also in four different subjects : English, the mother-tongue and two other subjects (chosen from quite as broad a range as that which the London University allows). Madras on the other hand insists upon specialisation even for the Pass degree. Candidates have to offer English (compulsory) and an optional group. Tamil has a place among the optional groups. A student of the London University, if he prefers to offer Tamil as one of his subjects can offer in addition to it Sanskrit, Philosophy and Mathematics ; or his choice may be Latin, Tamil, English and Chemistry or Physics. He can make his choice in several different ways. A Calcutta University student in addition to English and Tamil has the opportunity of studying and offering for examination two other subjects. But a Madras University student if he chooses to offer his mother-tongue has to pay the penalty by restricting himself to Tamil and the "indispensable" compulsory English. The ordinary student who goes to college to obtain a general education which will enable him to earn a living finds that a Pass Diploma which contains English and Tamil only is next to useless in the job-market. Again from the educational point of view, general culture demands





something more than a knowledge of two unallied languages. If the Madras University like her sisters of London and Calcutta allows her students to offer one more subject say, Mathematics, Philosophy or a Science in addition to English and the mother-tongue almost all Tamilian students would offer Tamil. The Pass course should surely have a wider scope, if the Pass degree is to be taken as a hall-mark of general culture. If specialization is aimed at, well, the Honours course is there to serve that purpose. Now, what indeed does the University of Madras do? Under the plea of intensive study, it penalizes all students who are over-patriotic to offer their mother-tongue by restricting them to bread and water, bread in the shape of a few English texts and water in the shape of an extremely limpid course in Tamil where text-books are chosen not so much for their depth as for their transparency and clearness. The students are allowed to have nothing further. Under these conditions could any student who desires to profit himself by his university course afford to spend four precious years in studying nothing but English and Tamil. We are not speaking here of the genius who has so much love for Tamil that he would not care to study anything else, nor are we concerned with the lazy and dull student who wants to earn a cheap degree by some means or other; we are concerned with the average student who would like to take a course in his mother-tongue and at the same time would like to obtain a general culture by taking courses in two or more other subjects. What scope does the University of Madras offer to such a student? Considered in this light, it is easy to see that the universities of London and Calcutta foster Tamil much more than the University of Madras does. It is no wonder that students are not coming forward to spend their precious money and four years of their precious time to get in return the bread and water which the University of Madras has to offer them. The bread, we mean the English can be had with all the other courses and as for Tamil, we shall presently show that as matters stand at present, more Tamil and better Tamil can be had outside the portals of the university with much less expense of money. Where, then, comes the necessity for taking a course in Tamil at the university? Can a better or more innocent-looking scheme be devised for starving to inanition and finally turning out of doors Tamil and the unfortunate men who are engaged in teaching it.



Here it is good for us to remember that the chief Tamil lecturer (or as he is conveniently called in certain government-managed institutions, the Head Tamil Pandita) receives a salary often equal to about one-tenth of what his colleague the English professor receives. Madras would do well to take a lesson from the Ceylon University College which pays its Tamil lecturer just as much as it pays the lecturer in any other subject.

The university has recently brought into existence some Oriental Titles examinations. Sanskrit studies, we have reason to believe, are making some headway under this new idea; Tamil stands just where it was. The reason for this is not far to seek; Sanskrit under this novel scheme is entitled to stand alone; Tamil has to tack itself on to Sanskrit or Malayalam or another sister language. We have spoken at some length on the present state of Tamil learning at the University of Madras.

Now let us proceed to see how Tamil learning stands outside the doors of the university. We do not know whether it testifies to the strength of traditional methods of learning or to the weakness of the Madras University, that the latter after having stood for seven decades is obliged to draw almost all her Tamil teachers from the ranks of the former. The chief lecturers in Tamil in almost all the colleges affiliated to the Madras University and almost all the men who form the Board of Studies for Tamil are men who received their training on traditional lines outside the portals of the Madras University. This one fact is sufficient to show that the old tree planted by the Pandyan kings still stands safe and sound, in spite of utter neglect and may we hope that it will ever continue to bear worthy blossoms. The pandits, however, are not quite as well organised as they ought to be and receive little or no state support to promulgate Tamil learning in accordance with the old and well-tried methods so well known to them. Love of learning and popular regard are the only incentives which sustain these men in the midst of dire poverty throughout the long years which they have to spend before they can get any return for their literary or educational labours. It is well to remember here, that the time and effort necessary for obtaining a university degree is not half so much as the time and effort necessary for becoming a pandita. A university course extends over three, four or five years; whereas a course of at least ten



years' duration is necessary to produce a pandit of moderate achievements, and at least twenty years of patient and persistent study are necessary before a pandit can hope to have a place in the foremost rank. The modern educationist with his fancy for made-easy courses cannot appreciate the stern mental discipline which pandits impose upon their pupils. A thorough study of grammar, the thorough mastering of one text before proceeding to another, the acquiring of a wide vocabulary, these are the principles upon which the pandit works. Old-fashioned Grammar School teachers who have taught Latin and Greek to hundreds of students according to old and well-tried methods would tell us that the principles upon which the pandit works are the soundest. But the modern educationist with his made-easy methods differs here ; he would tell us that grammar may be learned along with the reading of the texts ; as for the texts, it is quite as well to begin at the middle as to begin at the beginning and read till the end, and that it is sheer waste of time to learn lists of words by heart. Let the modern educationist keep his theories to himself and give the pandit a chance to do something in his own way. That is the only help the modern educationist can render to the pandit. Throughout the many long centuries of neglect and foreign invasion the pandit has kept the lamp of Tamil knowledge burning ; and let us hope that he will not fail at this hour when a foreign culture supported by all the strength that money and political power could command endeavours its best to fascinate and completely enslave the youth of this country.

#### VAIKOM.

We are not concerned with the political side of the quarrel that is going on at Vaikom between the Travancore Government and a certain section of His Highness the Maharajah's subjects. Vaikom gives us an illustration of the extent to which a meaningless prejudice could parade under the guise of religion and succeed in attacking the very foundations of that religion in the name of which, it attempts to hold high its ugly head.

Strange and meaningless are the ways of the caste-Hindus of Malabar. If a *Thiyya* passes near a temple, the temple or the deity, or the temple-priest—we do not know which—becomes polluted. If the same *Thiyya* embraces an alien faith, he can



approach the temple with immunity ; neither the temple nor the deity nor the priest suffers any pollution.

The incongruity is simply monstrous. Plainly stated, it stands thus, a certain section of the Maharajah's Hindu subjects will not be allowed to walk near Hindu temples ; but, if these same people on whom their arrogant brethren have imposed an inhuman ban were to renounce the old faith and get under the banner of Christ or Mohammed, the cowardly caste-Hindus make way for them. For, however much they may ill treat their own unfortunate brethren they dare not lift a finger against the other religionists for fear of the consequences. Could cowardice, arrogance and imbecility go any further ? The great Swami Vivekananda once observed that Malabar is a big lunatic asylum. Before the eyes of all India, Vaikom is bearing testimony to this fact. The progressive Government of Travancore has done much to ameliorate the condition of the Depressed Classes. We appeal to the caste-Hindus to stand by the Dewan, and help him to do away with the meaningless prejudice of untouchability which stands as a stain on the fair name of Malabar.

### NEWS AND REPORTS.

**His Holiness Srimath Swami Shivanandaji's visit to Madras.**

His Holiness Srimath Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, president of the Ramakrishna Mission arrived here on Wednesday, the 16th instant. Srimath Swami Bodhanandaji of the New York Vedanta Society and other Swamis accompanied His Holiness from Calcutta.

**Sri Ramakrishna Asrama, Trivandrum.**

A Correspondent writes :—

It is indeed an ideal Asrama that His Holiness the Swami Nirmalanandaji consecrated at Trivandrum on the 7th of March. Situated on the summit of a hill, six miles away from the heart of the town and commanding an extensive view of the town and its suburbs and having the dark blue ocean on the west, the magnificent Asrama is in every way worthy of the hand that laid the foundation stone in the year 1916. Seated on that bleak and lonely hill the Swami Brahmanandaji is said to have remarked even then that it would be the second Advaitasrama of the R. K. Mission.





The preparation of the design and the work of construction were kindly undertaken by that noble soul the late Mr. Hrishikesh Banerjee, the state engineer. It was no light or easy task that he took up and Mr. Banerjee literally gave his life to the noble cause. Rs. 25,000 has already been spent on the building and Rs. 7,000 more would be required to complete the work.

The installation ceremony took place on the Thithi pooja day and the formal opening and public celebration on the 16th instant. There was a large and distinguished gathering on both the occasions. Bhaktas from all parts of Travancore and from distant Malabar, many of the high state officials, and many ladies took part in the solemn functions. After pooja, Bhajana, and procession, about 1,500 persons were fed at the Asrama. One unique feature of the worship and the feeding was that in the name and the presence of Sree Ramakrishna all distinctions of caste and position were completely obliterated. The high caste Hindu spontaneously sat side by side with the pariah. All sat together, worshipped together, and ate together. Here was practical reform without platform speeches and newspaper blazoning. And here again was proof that India can unite under the banner of Sree Ramakrishna. It may be mentioned in this connection that two Christian gentlemen have contributed Rs. 1,000 each towards the cost of constructing the Asrama and that other religionists also shared in the functions of the day.

In winding up the proceedings at the close of the day, the Swami Nirmalanandaji heartily thanked the several donors who had freely and generously given their mite for the construction of the Asrama. Special thanks were offered to a poor and unknown Nair girl who had sent her only ornament, a nose-ring, towards the building fund. Incidentally the Swami spoke a few words on the work of the Ramakrishna Mission. Constructive work, said the Swami, was on the lips of every worker, whether in the political, social or religious field. But very few realised that their construction was impossible without destroying something else. The wave rises at the cost of the hollow. One nation rises at the expense of another. The constructive work of the Christian Missionary consists in adding to the Christian fold by taking away from the Non-Christian. So it was everywhere. In Malabar the Mopla rebellion has given us ample illustration of



'constructive work'. This sort of action on the constructive plane inevitably led to reaction. Thus it was in all spheres of present day activities. The result was never ending conflict. But there was, the Swamiji said, a point where the positive and the negative forces meet and which no reaction can touch or displace. That was the real constructive point and that was toleration and acceptance, harmony and goodwill, peace and Illumination. There was real work to be done. Seeing and realising the underlying unity of all religions; seeing and realising the oneness of man and the divinity of humanity; seeing and realising, in the words of the Gita sameness in the most erudite and holy Brahman and in the pariah in the cow and in the dog;—this was the only way to bring about harmony peace and goodwill among the warring elements. Sree Ramakrishna taught this and lived this. To this end the Rama krishna Mission is working. The Mission has nothing to do with politics nor even with social reform. But it believed in social service, in working for and worshipping the poorest and the lowliest as God. It aimed not at reformation but at vitalisation. After this inspiring speech, the audience repaired to the meditation hall where *arati* was performed. The function of the day being just over with the distribution of *prasadam*, there descended like the blessings of heaven a gentle shower of rain for two minutes, gladdening the hearts of all.

#### Synopsis of a Lecture.

We have received for publication the following synopsis of a lecture on "*Swami Vivekananda and Southern India*", delivered by Mr. V. Narayana Iyer, M. A., M. L.

The lecturer pointed how even when Swami Vivekananda came to South India as an unknown *Sanyasin*, the charm of his personality the depth of his culture and aggressive spirit of his religious views had captivated the hearts of South Indians and how they were responsible for sending him to the Parliament of Religions and how they were among the first to start activities along the lines the Swamiji wanted by starting periodicals expounding the Vedanta and by helping to found a branch of the Ramakrishna Mission in Madras. The lecturer then summarised the teachings of the Swamiji. The Swamiji held that the heart of the Indians was always attracted by religion as by nothing else and so it was necessary that



their daily life should be pervaded by the right religious spirit and their lives should be one continuous dedication to God. He came, the Swamiji used to say, to bring the Vedanta Philosophy from the forests and the cloisters of cultured Sanyasis where the great Sankara had established it to the market places of the world for the daily use of the common people. He maintained that God was one Existence-Knowledge-Bliss and to realise that truth and see God in all things is salvation. To attain such a vision of the Oneness of God might be difficult, but it is possible to everyone on this earth and even in this life if one had only the will. Salvation was not the privilege of any particular caste or creed nor was there any short cut or special road to reach the goal. It is the glory of the Hindu religion that it does not deny salvation even to those who are outside its pale of influence. In this respect Swamiji went even one step further than Sankara and preached the truth boldly that everybody living his ordained life dedicating it in his own way to God can attain to Godhead. He maintained that *Karma*, *Gnana* and *Bhakti* were all independent and equally efficacious methods to attain salvation and it was not necessary to pass from one to the other to attain it though usually as the methods are inter-related a good man will be a good *Karma*, *Gnan*, and *Bhakta* at the same time. The Swamiji used to point out in this connection that the glory of Hinduism lay in the fact that its outstretched wings were wide enough to embrace all stages of religious development and all ranges of humanity from the undeveloped aborigines to the Super-human and God-pointed men.

Rightly understood, according to the Swamiji there was no caste problem. All castes and for that matter all men were equal before God; the Advaitin sees himself in everybody else and how can he see any limitation in others. So let each man follow his particular avocation without fear, without attachment to the result, for no occupation is a hindrance to salvation. What is required is an ardent and unquenchable desire to develop the divine in one's self and to change the angle of vision from worldly ambition to the Divine purpose in life. Swamiji pointed out that most of the Hindus who fondly imagined themselves to be *Saadhaks* were really *Iamaks* in character and how it was necessary that they should develop not only in spirituality but in physique and lead healthy



moral lives. "To the weak there is no Heaven" "Arise and awake and grasp the Eternal truth and realise it." That was Swamiji's message. Have no fear; take courage with both hands, realise that you are nothing else than God, that "no fire can burn you, no water can quench you, no sword can harm you, no death can approach you." The Vedas contain almost all the different paths that men may require to attain Godhead. The Gita is the best commentary written on the Vedas. With the help of these Books the Hindu must be sure of his salvation.

If Swamiji emphasised Adwaita it was in no antagonistic spirit. He had no quarrel with the Vishistadwaitin or even the Dwaitin. He was afraid that duality might lead to fear and firmly believed that Adwaitam was a more certain remedy to the many ills that beset Hindu society today.

The lecturer finally pointed out that the Swamiji was fond of saying that the influence of a great man's words were little compared with the influence of his Holy and ennobling Presence and of his grace-lit eyes and in spite of Swamiji's general contempt towards institutionalising, he started the Ramakrishna Mission solely with the object of conserving the great spiritual truths of Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva handed by Him to His disciples and that we must all be grateful to the Sanyasis and the Brahmacharis of the Mutt for spreading the clarion message of Shri Guru Maharaj broadcast among the people.

### GLEANINGS.

#### STRUGGLE FOR EXPANSION.

*Hitherto unpublished article by Swami Vivekananda appearing for the first time in "The Message of the East" Vol XIII. No 2.*

The old dilemma whether the tree precedes the seed or the seed the tree, runs through all our forms of knowledge. Whether intelligence is first in the order of being, or matter; whether the ideal is first or the external manifestation; whether freedom is our true nature or bondage of law; whether thought creates matter or matter thought; whether the incessant change in nature precedes the idea of rest or the idea of rest precedes the idea of change; all these are questions of the same insoluble nature. Like the rise and





fall of a series of waves, they follow one another in an invariable succession, and men take this side or that according to their tastes or education or peculiarity of temperaments.

For instance, if it be said that seeing the adjustment of nature of different parts, it is clear that it is the effect of intelligent work; on the other hand it may be argued that intelligence itself being created by matter and force in the course of evolution could not have been before this world. If it be said that the production of every form must be preceded by an ideal in the mind, it can be urged with equal force, that the ideal was itself created by various external experiences. On the one hand the appeal is to our ever present idea of freedom; on the other, to the fact that nothing in the universe being causeless, everything both mental and physical is rigidly bound by the law of causation. If it be affirmed that, seeing the changes of the body induced by volition, it is evident that thought is the creator of this body, it is equally clear that a change in the body induces a change in the thought, the body must have produced the mind. If it be argued that the universal change must be the outcome of a preceding rest, equally logical argument can be adduced to show that the idea of unchangeability is only an illusory relative notion, brought about by the comparative differences in motion.

Thus in the ultimate analysis all knowledge resolves itself into this vicious circle, the indeterminate interdependence of cause and effect. Judging by the laws of reasoning, such knowledge is incorrect; and the most curious fact is that this knowledge is proved to be incorrect, not by comparison with knowledge which is true, but by the very laws which depend for this basis upon the self-same vicious circles. It is clear, therefore that the peculiarity of all our knowledge is that it proves its own insufficiency. Again, we cannot say that it is unreal, for all the reality we know and can think of is within this knowledge. Nor can we deny that it is sufficient for all practical purposes. This state of human knowledge which embraces within its scope both the external and the internal worlds is called *Maya*. It is unreal because it proves its own incorrectness. It is real in the sense of being sufficient for all the needs of the animal man.

Acting on the external world *Maya* manifests itself as the two



powers of attraction and repulsion. In the internal its manifestations are desire and non-desire (*pravritti* and *nivritti*). The whole universe is trying to rush outwards. Each atom is trying to fly off from its centre. In the internal world, each thought is trying to go beyond control. Again each particle is checked by another force, the centripetal, and drawn towards the centre, so in the thought world the controlling power is checking all these outgoing desires.

Desires of materialization, that is, the being dragged down more and more to the plane of mechanical action belong to the animal man. It is only when the desire to prevent all such bondage to the senses arises that religion dawns in the heart of man. Thus we see that the whole scope of religion is to prevent man from falling into bondage of the senses and to help him to assert his freedom. The first effort of this power of *Nivritti* towards that end, is called morality. The scope of all morality is to prevent this degradation and break this bondage. All morality can be divided into the positive and the negative elements ; either it says, "Do this" or "Do not do this". When it says "Do not," it is evident that it is a check to a certain desire which would make a man a slave. When it says "do", its scope is to show the way to freedom and to the breaking down of a certain degradation which has already seized the human heart.

Now this morality is only possible if there be a liberty to be attained by man. Apart from the question of the chances of attaining perfect liberty, it is clear that the whole universe is a case of struggle to expand, or in other words to attain liberty. This infinite space is not sufficient for even one atom. The struggle for expansion must go on eternally until perfect liberty is attained. It cannot be said that this struggle to gain freedom is to avoid pain or to attain pleasure. The lowest grade of beings, who can have no such feeling, also are struggling for expansion and according to many, man himself is the expansion of these very beings.

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